AL-16-000-4853

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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February 23, 2016

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy,

The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology is conducting oversight of travel by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) employees. According to a media reports, Janet McCabe, the Acting Assistant Administrator of EPA's Office of Air and Radiation, routinely commutes to work in Washington, DC, from her home in Indianapolis, Indiana.[1] Assistant Administrator McCabe reportedly returns to her home in Indianapolis for "separation" from her official work in Washington each weekend.[2] Last year, President Obama issued an Executive Order, calling on the heads of each Executive Branch departments and agencies to "consider the development of policies to promote sustainable commuting."[3] In light of President Obama's 2015 Executive Order, as well as McCabe's role as the EPA's chief proponent of the Clean Power Plan, McCabe's routine travel raises significant questions as to her commitment toward furthering the reduction of carbon emissions that she promotes in her official capacity on the taxpayer's dime.

According to a news report detailing McCabe's significant role in spearheading the EPA's outreach efforts to promote the Clean Power Plan to stakeholders across the country, McCabe is the "public face" of the EPA as it works to draw support for its controversial regulation.[4] In an interview with McCabe days before the Agency promulgated its final rule, McCabe stated, "We were on the road a lot when the proposal went out, and then back off as we

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[1] Rod Kuckro, *McCabe Savors Role as Evangelist for Agency's Carbon Rules*, E&E ENERGYWIRE, Oct. 28, 2015, *available at* http://www.eenews.net/energywire/2015/10/28/stories/1060027027 (last visited Feb. 23, 2016) [hereinafter Kuckro, *McCabe Savors Role*]; Maureen Groppe, *Hoosier's Fight for Clean Air*, INDYSTAR, Feb. 16, 2014, *available at* http://www.indystar.com/story/news/politics/2014/02/16/a-hoosiers-fight-for-clean-air/5534683/ (last visited Feb. 23, 2016).
[2] Kuckro, *McCabe Savors Role*, *supra* note 1.
[3] Executive Order 13693, *available at* https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/03/19/executive-order-planning-federal-sustainability-next-decade (last visited Feb. 23, 2016) [hereinafter EO 13693].
[4] Kuckro, *McCabe Savors Role*, *supra* note 1.

were finalizing the rule. And now we and others from [the Office of Air and Radiation] are on the road talking to people because it would be helpful for us to go."[5]

Despite her hectic travel schedule as part of her official position with the EPA, McCabe routinely enjoys weekends away from Washington where she maintains her permanent home in Indianapolis.[6] In the same interview she explained: "My mind is on [the Clean Power Plan] a lot. So I go home every weekend, get a little bit of separation. I do work at home. But at least I'm home, you know, with the dog and the spouse."[7]

Recently, the EPA Office of Inspector General (OIG) issued an audit, concluding that a former Region 9 Administrator traveled home to southern California from his office in San Francisco, accumulating $69,000 in excessive trips from October 2006 through January 2009.[8] The former Region 9 Administrator claimed ineligible expenses associated with his travel, such as meals, mileage, and incidental expenses at a cost of nearly $4,000 to taxpayers.[9] In its report, the EPA OIG identified a series of recommendations to the EPA to improve the agency's oversight of routine travel by agency officials.[10]

McCabe's routine travel not only raises questions about her commitment toward furthering the carbon reduction agenda she promotes on official time and responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars, but also raises significant concerns about how her practices coincide with President Obama's Executive Order, calling for federal leadership in sustainability and greenhouse gas emission reductions.[11] Specifically, Executive Order 13693 instructs the heads of Executive Branch departments and agencies to "consider the development of policies to promote sustainable commuting and work-related travel practices for Federal employees."[12]

In fact, in your capacity as EPA Administrator, you made public comments in support of the President's Executive Order during a speech at the 2015 GreenGov Symposium.[13] You stated, "The President's recent executive order was absolutely a moment in time for us to step back and relish just how far we have come. When we start talking about how we move forward with our supply chain, we can send a signal that will reverberate to every economy and every sector in this country."[14] Although you have pledged your support for the President's measure, examples such as the case of McCabe—the EPA's chief advocate for reducing carbon emissions—raise significant questions about the example EPA is setting.

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[5] *Id.*
[6] *Id.*
[7] *Id.*
[8] *See* Environmental Protection Agency Inspector Gen., *EPA Needs Better Management Controls for Approval of Employee Travel* (Sept. 22, 2015) (15-P-0294), at 4, *available at* http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/20150922-15-p-0294.pdf (last visited Feb. 23, 2016).
[9] *Id.* at 6–7.
[10] *Id.* at 9, 19.
[11] EO 13693, *supra* note 3.
[12] *Id.*
[13] GW Sustainability Collaborative, 2015 GreenGov Symposium – Keynote by EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy (Jun. 10, 2015), *available at* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKFgBA_LuRI (last visited Feb. 23, 2016).
[14] *Id.* (emphasis added).

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To better understand how EPA manages its travel policies in accordance with Executive Order 13693, I request the following documents and information as soon as possible, but by no later than noon on March 8, 2016:

1. All documents and communications referring or relating to Janet McCabe's travel and associated expenses, including lodging, paid for by the EPA, from January 1, 2012 to the present.

2. All EPA policies and procedures related to official travel and associated expenses, including lodging.

3. A list of all EPA employees including GS-15 and senior executive service who routinely commute by aircraft to and from their permanent work station.

4. All directives and communications provided to EPA employees referring or relating to Executive Order 13693, including any e-mails from the Executive Office of the President.

The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology has jurisdiction over environmental and scientific programs and "shall review and study on a continuing basis laws, programs, and Government activities" as set forth in House Rule X.

When producing documents to the Committee, please deliver production sets to the Majority Staff in Room 2321 of the Rayburn House Office Building and the Minority Staff in Room 394 of the Ford House Office Building. The Committee prefers, if possible, to receive all documents in electronic format.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Lamar Echols or Caroline Ingram of the Committee Staff at 202-225-6371. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Lamar Smith

Lamar Smith
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson, Ranking Minority Member

16-000-4853

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON D C 20460

MAR 1 8 2016

OFFICE OF THE
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Honorable Lamar Smith
Chairman
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letters of February 23, and March 11, 2016, requesting certain information relating to travel by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency employees. This letter is an initial response.

We appreciated the constructive teleconference that our staff recently had with your staff and the clarifications your staff provided regarding the four categories of information that you are seeking. The EPA recognizes the importance of the Committee's need to obtain information necessary to perform its legitimate oversight functions, and is committed to continuing to work with your staff on how best to accommodate the Committee's interests in the documents requested in your letter.

Your letter requests documents and communications referring or relating to Acting Assistant Administrator Janet McCabe's travel and associated expenses over a specified time period. As explained to your staff, we have begun collecting the travel documentation for the Acting Assistant Administrator's travels and have initiated a search for relevant communications. EPA changed travel systems on October 1, 2014 going from GovTrip to Concur. The travel documentation search involves both systems and will therefore take additional time. We will provide documents responsive to this question on a rolling basis.

Your letter also requests EPA policies or procedures related to official travel and expenses. We are enclosing several documents responsive to this request (Enclosures 1 – 6).

Enclosure 1 is the EPA Official Travel Manual. The Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), as amended, is the first source of reference for all federal travel, e.g., travel of employees with special needs, permanent or temporary change of official station. Additionally, the FTR grants to agencies discretionary authority to establish specific internal policies. The Official Travel Manual is such a policy. To minimize repetition, this policy does not repeat each travel entitlement that is listed in the FTR. This policy discusses the guidelines for the EPA's discretionary allowances. All EPA employees and travel authorizing officials shall know and

comply with the FTR and the EPA travel policies and procedures. This policy applies to the EPA employees and other federal employees' travel that the EPA funds and travel under statutes that authorize the EPA to use appropriated funds to directly pay for travel of nonfederal individuals. Additionally, this policy addresses travel that nonfederal sources fund for the EPA employees.

Enclosure 2 is the policy procedure entitled Relocation Allowances for Change of Official Station. Relocation only occurs when existing employees at a duty location cannot satisfactorily perform official agency business. This policy: requires that written authorization must precede the occurrence of official relocation travel; provides information for creating travel authorizations and processing payments to eligible employees and new appointees for reimbursement of expenses incurred while traveling to a change of official station; interprets requirements and entitlements in a manner that balances the need to ensure that change of official station is conducted responsibly with minimal administrative costs; provides procedures for the EPA Relocation Counselors, employees and new appointees; and establishes the EPA guidelines for official domestic and international relocation allowances.

Enclosure 3 is a delegation of authority related to domestic travel. Domestic travel is official travel within the continental United States (the 48 contiguous States and the District of Columbia) and non-foreign areas (the states of Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories and possessions of the United States). This delegation authorizes agency officials to approve domestic travel for the EPA employees, excluding employees of the EPA's Office of Inspector General, and individuals receiving invitational travel orders as authorized by the FTR, published by the General Services Administration at 41 Code of Federal Regulations, Chapters 300 through 304. These regulations implement statutory requirements and Executive branch policies for federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at federal government expense. The document also provides any applicable limitations.

Enclosure 4 is a delegation of authority related to international travel. International travel is official business to, from, and within areas outside the 50 states; the District of Columbia; the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands; and territories of the United States. This delegation authorizes agency officials to approve international travel for the EPA employees, excluding employees of the EPA's Office of Inspector General, and individuals receiving invitational travel orders as authorized by the Federal Travel Regulation, published by the General Services Administration at 41 Code of Federal Regulations, Chapters 300 through 304. These regulations implement statutory requirements and Executive branch policies for federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel or relocate at federal government expense. The document also provides any applicable limitations.

Enclosure 5 is a guidance document related to emergency travel. The Emergency Travel Guidance document provides information on travel policies and procedures for employees who are required to travel during a national disaster, emergency, or a pandemic health crisis. This document provides only quick guidance during an emergency situation. While this document answers frequently asked questions about emergency travel, employees are advised to contact their approving official for more detailed policy guidance.

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Enclosure 6 contains answers to frequently asked questions about rides. The RIDES Frequently Asked Questions document provides information related to ethics, appropriations and liability. As part of official duties, EPA employees may find themselves driving or riding in a government-owned vehicle, rental car or personally owned vehicle. Additionally, employees may be asked to give or share rides with non-federal employees (e.g., State or Tribal officials, contractors, family members). This document answers frequently asked questions about rides.

Your letter further requests a list of certain types of EPA employees who routinely commute by aircraft to or from their duty station. As a general matter, the government is not responsible for providing transportation to or from an employee's duty station (or reimbursement for such transportation), and, therefore, the EPA does not have information on how every employee commutes to or from their duty station. The agency does provide transit and parking subsidies in certain situations (e.g., for those who commute by mass transit) and has some commuting information from employees who apply for these subsidies. Those programs do not subsidize the cost of commuting by airplane, however, so those programs are not likely to have additional information on employees who may commute by airplane (if any). Finally, in 2014, the EPA administered a GSA survey regarding the modes of transportation used by employees to commute to or from their duty station during a typical week. The agency received 6,944 responses (approximately 46% of the agency at that time) to the survey. Only two respondents indicated that they utilized an "other" form of transportation and indicated airplane or air travel as a mode. Because the survey is anonymous, the agency is not able to identify those two individuals.

Finally, your letter requests certain official communications to EPA employees referring or relating to Executive Order 13693, *Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade*, signed by President Obama on March 19, 2015. In addition to the announcement of the Executive Order and associated implementing instructions issued by the White House, we have identified two EPA documents responsive to your request. Enclosure 7 is a memorandum signed by A. Stanley Meiburg, Acting Deputy Administrator, titled "Implementation of Executive Order 13693: Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade - EPA Roles and Responsibilities." Enclosure 8 is a memorandum from Karl Brooks, at the time both the Acting Assistant Administrator of the Office of Administration and Resource Management and the EPA's designated Chief Sustainability Officer for purposes of Executive Order 13963.

Since the June 15, 2015, memo, the EPA has continued to work to meet or exceed its goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, energy intensity and water use intensity, as well as support sustainable buildings, renewable energy, sustainable purchasing, energy performance contracts, electronics stewardship and climate resiliency through a variety of activities. Looking ahead, the EPA will continue working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, energy, water and waste, as well as support sustainable buildings, green purchasing, electronics stewardship and climate resiliency through a variety of strategies that will be released this summer as part of the agency's updated Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan. Past plans outlining the EPA's efforts and progress to meet sustainability goals can be found on the EPA website at http://www.epa.gov/greeningepa/epa-strategic-sustainability-plans.

Again, thank you for your letters. If you have any further questions, you may contact me or your staff may contact Tom Dickerson in the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at dickerson.tom@epa.gov or (202) 564-3638.

Sincerely,

David A. Bloom
Deputy Chief Financial Officer

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Ranking Member

	U. S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of the Chief Financial Officer Policy Procedure	
	Official Travel	
	Effective Date: 4/17/2015 Supersedes Resource Management Directive System 2550B, Travel Manual 2012	Resource Management Directive System 2550B Official Travel

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

General Services Administration publishes the Federal Travel Regulation, the regulation contained in 41 Code of Federal Regulations, Chapters 300 through 304, that implements statutory requirements and Executive branch policies for federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at federal government expense. The Federal Travel Regulation, as amended, is the *first* source of reference for all federal travel, e.g., travel of employees with special needs, permanent or temporary change of official station. Additionally, the Federal Travel Regulation grants to agencies discretionary authority to establish specific internal policies.

To minimize repetition, this policy does not repeat each travel entitlement that is listed in the Federal Travel Regulation. This policy discusses the guidelines for the Environmental Protection Agency's discretionary allowances.

All EPA employees and travel authorizing officials shall know and comply with the Federal Travel Regulation and the EPA travel policies and procedures. If any differences, except for discretionary allowances, exist between this policy and the Federal Travel Regulation, the Federal Travel Regulation governs. *All travel requests and authorizations require compliance with the Federal Travel Regulation and the EPA guidelines.* Program offices and regions supplement these policies, as necessary, with *additional* administrative procedures and restrictions consistent with the Federal Travel Regulation and the EPA guidelines and responsibilities. The agency, program offices or regions, as appropriate, will notify labor representatives of any additional administrative procedures or restrictions and will bargain to the extent required by law.

Authority

- Federal Travel Regulation Chapters 300-304. (http://gsa.gov/ftr)
  Chapter 300 – General
  Chapter 301 – Temporary Duty Allowances
  Chapter 302 – Relocation Allowances
  Chapter 303 – Payment Connected with Death
  Chapter 304 – Payment from Non-Federal Source

- Office of Management and Budget guidelines. (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_default)

- United States Code, Title 5, *Government Organization and Employees* (specifically Chapter 57, which provides allowances for travel, transportation and subsistence). (http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/05C57.txt)

- The EPA Official Travel. (http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/policies/resource.htm)

This policy applies to the EPA employees and other federal employees' travel that the EPA funds and travel under statutes that authorize the EPA to use appropriated funds to directly pay for travel of nonfederal individuals. Additionally, this policy addresses travel that nonfederal sources fund for the EPA employees.

This policy does not apply to travel funded through the EPA contracts or financial assistance agreements. The EPA travel policy does not apply to Commissioned Officers. The Department of Defense issues the Joint Federal Travel Regulations, which governs travel for Commissioned Officers.

II. MANDATORY REVIEW

The next review for this policy is three years. However, review and revision of this policy will occur as new federal regulations or the EPA policy warrants.

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III. DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY

The EPA established three delegations of authority related to approval for all travel in its Delegations Manual. The list below shows the applicable delegations of authority.

- Delegation 1-17-A, Domestic Travel. (http://intranet.epa.govohr/rmpolicy/ads.dm/index1.htm)
- Delegation 1-17-B, International (Foreign and Invitational-Foreign) Travel. (http://intranet.epa.govohr/rmpolicy/ads.dm/index1.htm)
- Delegation 1-17-C, Domestic and International Travel for the Office of Inspector General. (http://intranet.epa.govohr/rmpolicy/ads.dm/index1.htm)

The EPA Administrator authorizes specific agency officials to take action under Delegations 1-17-A, 1-17-B or 1-17-C and allows these officials to redelegate their authority to positions or equivalents specified in the redelegation provisions of the original delegations unless restricted or nontransferable as a matter of law. Redelegation requires written documentation and records of the changes maintained in the offices or regions' internal delegation files. A delegation or redelegation of authority does not relieve the original or subsequent delegatees of oversight responsibility for the authorities they delegate.

Delegations in the various EPA policies and guidelines other than the EPA Delegations Manual constitute valid delegations as long as the references comply with the authority conferred on program offices or regions in 40 CFR Part 1 and are current and consistent with delegations in the Delegations Manual.

As a matter of agency policy and ethical considerations, employees (officials and staff) must not authorize or approve their own travel. Program offices and regions must designate officials to authorize or approve travel. Additionally, ensure that alternate individuals are designated to authorize or approve travel for travel authorizing officials. In the event that someone other than a designated official approves travel, the responsible office for employees, must inform the Chief Financial Officer within five business days and must provide adequate justification why the designated official did not approve the travel documents.

All travel authorizing officials should designate individuals to act in their capacity during their absences. Such designation requires written authorization unless the officials' absence results from sudden illness or emergency. Email is an acceptable form of authorization provided that travel authorizing officials and the delegated individual maintain a record of the designation either electronically or in paper form. Designation of authority to act in the absence of officials conveys all authority of the officials, unless otherwise stated in the EPA Delegations of Authority. When a principal approver is not available the traveler will follow the Executive Approval Framework available on the intranet: http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/finservices/pdfs/executive_approval_framework.pdf

Roles and responsibilities for the travel process help determine the need for travel, alternatives to travel and the most effective routing and means to accomplish official travel. Also, roles and responsibilities ensure compliance with the federal government regulations and the EPA requirements. Various aspects of travel require approval or action from the EPA Administrator, senior officials, organizations, designated officials and individuals.

IV. RESPONSIBLITIES

THE EPA ADMINISTRATOR AND SENIOR OFFICIALS

Administrator

- Designates officials to authorize travel related expenses through the EPA Delegations Manual or otherwise.

- Authorizes, on a case-by-case basis, an exception to the required use of the EPA Travel Management Center or E-Gov Travel Service system. The designee also performs this responsibility.

- Temporarily lifts, when necessary, the requirement for credit worthiness assessments for the application process for a travel card to ensure the safety of American citizens and property when a national emergency or a disaster occurs and disrupts normal travel activities. Credit worthiness assessments will continue when the situation stabilizes, for example, the national emergency ends. The designee also performs this responsibility.

Assistant Administrators, Regional Administrators, General Counsel and Chief Financial Officer may:

- Waive the requirement, for their respective employees, to apply for the federal government travel card based upon extenuating personal circumstances the employees describe. Waivers require documentation and maintenance in the officials' files consistent with the EPA records management policies. For additional information, access http://www.epa.gov/records/policy/index.htm. To ensure confidentiality of personal information, refer to the EPA Privacy Act Manual at http://www.epa.gov/policy/privacy/2190/.

- Authorize a waiver from the EPA local travel rule, in unique, not routine situations, for their respective employees when it is necessary to allow per diem within 50 miles of the official station to conduct official business. Send, for approval, all after-the-fact or post-travel requests for local travel waivers to the Director, Office of Financial Management in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer.

- Grant a waiver from the EPA local travel rule to allow per diem within 50 miles of the official station for on-scene coordinators or other employees working at remedial or removal sites, and grant a waiver for investigators, inspectors, auditors and legal personnel assigned to perform official duties outside of the EPA facilities. Send, for approval, all after-the fact or post-travel requests for local travel waivers to the Director, Office of Financial Management in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer.

Deputy Chief of Staff in the Office of the Administrator

Authorizes waivers from the EPA local travel rule, in unique situations, for his or her employees, when it is necessary to allow lodging and per diem within 50 miles of the official station to conduct official business. Sends, for approval, all after-the-fact or post-travel requests for local travel waivers to the Director, Office of Financial Management in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer.

ORGANIZATIONS

Office of the Chief Financial Officer

- Manages the EPA travel program to ensure that the program complies with the federal government regulations and the EPA policy.

- Monitors travel program effectiveness.

Office of Budget

- Manages and maintains the EPA budget data.

- Advises program offices and regions of any travel restrictions or limitations due to budgetary restraints.

- Provides and monitors travel ceiling amounts. Determines, on a case-by-case basis, when to approve requests for increases for program offices or regions.

Office of Financial Management

- Issues policies and procedures for official EPA travel, including procedures regarding travel cards.

- Provides guidance to program offices and regions.

Office of Financial Services, Cincinnati Finance Center

- Manages the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system.

- Maintains the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system Help Desk and responds to employees within 24 hours of receiving a request for assistance.

- Manages the E-Gov Travel Service system Federal Agency Travel Administrator functions on behalf of a program office or region if that office or region transfers its responsibility to the Cincinnati Finance Center. This responsibility includes maintaining organizations, routing lists, account signatures, groups, names of employees, lines of accounting and the centrally billed account. *The Cincinnati Finance Center will not accept routing changes from employees.*

- Appropriate designated officials for employees must provide updates, e.g., changes in positions,

approvers for new employees, new approver for current employees and removal of an approver no longer with the office or no longer employees. The updates require a memorandum in email to the Cincinnati Finance Center. All correspondence must be retained as documentation. In coordination with the Cincinnati Finance Center, program offices and regions should supplement these guidelines, as needed, to comply with internal controls and separation of duties.

- Enters or maintains electronic funds transfer information in the EPA's accounting system for the EPA and invitational travelers.

- Assists with the E-Gov Travel Service system training when requested.

- Serves as the EPA travel payment office.

- Pays proper travel claims, e.g., allowable expenses with required receipts, within 30 calendar days of receipt of travel vouchers.

- Notifies employees, within 7 business days after employees submit travel claims, of any error that prevents payment within 30 calendar days after submission. Explains, when a claim is denied, why the claim is not proper.

- Transfers Superfund related travel documents and receipts from the E-Gov Travel Service system to the Superfund Cost Recovery Package Imaging and Online System.

- Coordinates use of the EPA centrally billed account that pays travel expenses for nonfederal individuals traveling at the EPA's invitation and for federal employees who do not have a travel card.

- Maintains a log of travel vouchers paid pursuant to a waiver, e.g., 50 mile local travel rule.

- Performs verifications and internal reviews, as needed, to ensure that the EPA pays only valid travel expenses.

- Processes and reviews completed travel vouchers. Liquidates any advance accounts or collects any refunds the employees owe.[1]

- Ensures random audits for travel vouchers less than $2,500. Audits all travel vouchers that exceed $2,500, excluding the cost of the airfare and all travel vouchers prepared for Presidential appointees and employees at the Assistant or Regional Administrator level or higher.[2]

- Annually issues to applicable employees the *Income Tax Withholding Record for Taxable Temporary Duty Travel.*

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[1] Key Internal Control

[2] Key Internal Control

- Coordinates the EPA's financial management activities related to accounts receivables for travel, including nonfederal or outside source travel and salary offset. Issues bills to outside sources for reimbursement of travel expenses that the EPA employees incurred as approved from the Office of General Counsel pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1353. Reimburses individual office's travel account after receipt of outside source payment.

- Manages the EPA travel card program.

- Advises Agency Program Coordinators, employees and supervisors of available travel card training and new regulations or requirements governing travel when requested or as appropriate.

- Obtains and maintains certification from all program participants (travel cardholders) who received initial or refresher travel card training. Understands and interprets regulations and procedures and knows the consequences of inappropriate actions or misuse of the travel card. Maintains master file or official cardholder records, including training, usage limits and related records. Maintains certifications consistent with the EPA records management policies. (http://www.epa.gov/records/policy/schedule/number.htm).

- Consolidates the Agency Program Coordinator quarterly reports of travel card misuse or abuse, delinquency and disciplinary action taken in conjunction with travel card infractions.

- Reviews available data, including the use of data mining if available, on a quarterly basis to detect delinquency, fraud and misuse and to identify trends and observations relevant indicators of travel card performance. Conducts more frequent reviews at management's request or at the Agency Program Coordinator's discretion.

- Run and review quarterly reports for frequent travelers to the same location, and submit irregularities to the Financial Policy & Planning Staff for further review.

Office of General Counsel, Office of Regional Counsel

- Through Headquarters office and regional counsels, interprets all travel related laws and regulations and advises employees on legal issues concerning travel, including but not limited to the Ethics in Government Act, 31 U.S.C. 1353 and the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act, 5 U.S.C. 7342.

- Reviews and approves in advance any request for acceptance of nonfederal or outside source payment of travel expenses for the EPA employees.

Office of Human Resources

- Develops and communicates to all travel cardholders the human resources policies and disciplinary procedures for the EPA. Travel card delinquency and misuse are examples of misuse of position and serious employees' misconduct.

- Coordinates with the Office of General Counsel to provide recommendations to employees' management the appropriate disciplinary action, e.g., written reprimand, suspension or removal

from federal government service, for employees misuse or delinquency related to the travel card. The EPA *Conduct and Discipline Manual* is the basis for any recommendation. Find this manual on the EPA Intranet at http://intranet.epa.gov/policy/conductdiscipline.htm. The EPA management will assess penalties depending on the circumstances consistent with due process procedures.

- Determines staffing positions and assists program offices and regions with selection of eligible candidates for relocation and benefits.

Office of International and Tribal Affairs

- Determines whether international travel is in the best interest of the EPA and the federal government's goals and priorities. This office makes a determination after consultation with the Department of State and after considering the nature, duration and location of the travel and the completion of all procedural requirements. In addition, this office considers its knowledge of the socio-economic political situation in the host country and uses Department of State advisories and U.S. embassy clearances as mechanisms to provide current information and decisions. The Office of International and Tribal Affairs is the final authority in the EPA for making this determination, with the exception of travel for employees in the Office of Inspector General. The final authority for employees in the Office of Inspector General lies with the Inspector General.

- Advises the Office of the Administrator when a situation in a host country changes or there is a potential international security concern and upcoming travel requires cancellation or postponement. Determines if employees already abroad should remain or return to the United States. In most cases, makes decisions in concert with the Assistant or Regional Administrator involved, after consultation with the appropriate embassy and the Department of State.

- Coordinates official international travel with the Department of State Headquarters and American embassies before the EPA employees travel outside the United States. Coordination includes requesting and obtaining visas, official passports and any addition required clearance applications.

- Refers employees to the EPA health unit or the Department of State health unit for required inoculations to travel abroad. If the health unit does not provide assistance, the EPA recommends that employees seek immunizations from their physicians.

- Must receive all international travel requests, in an electronic International Trip Plan in the Fast International Approval of Travel database, at least 21 calendar days before departure or earlier if possible. If the travel includes payment of expenses from a nonfederal source, must ensure that the Office of General Counsel Ethics official approves the acceptance in advance. The intranet site is http://intranet.epa.gov/OIA/international-travel/fiat.html.

- Determines, on a case-by-case basis, whether to approve a travel request received fewer than 21 days prior to the scheduled date of departure. The Department of State emphasizes that the country clearance process is an integral part of the authority and responsibility of all chiefs of missions overseas or the desk officer at the Department of State. Travel is not officially approved until both the international trip plan and travel authorization documents are signed.

DESIGNATED OFFICIALS

Agency Program Coordinators

- Serve as the EPA primary liaison with the travel card contractor bank. The Agency Program Coordinator resides in a program office or a region, or the Cincinnati Finance Center performs these functions when transferred or delegated.

- Receive, prior to appointment as Agency Program Coordinators, the GSA's Agency Program Coordinator online training (http://www.gsa.gov portal/content/101601) on roles and responsibilities, to include proper management, control and oversight tools and techniques, and the Federal Travel Regulation. Agency Program Coordinators also receive the same training and refresher training as travel cardholders.

- Maintain open lines of communication with travel cardholders, supervisors and managers to ensure that all participants know the regulations and policies governing the EPA travel card program. Ensure that cardholders comply with the provisions and intent of the EPA travel card program policies. Inform cardholders, supervisors and managers on the proper use of the travel card.

- Manage and monitor the EPA travel card program. Identifies potential misuse of travel card and follows up on delinquent accounts.

- Review and maintains account information contained in the EPA or contractor online systems. Coordinates with the Office of Human Resources, Labor and Employee Relations and the travel card contractor bank to resolve disputes and issues delinquency notices.

- Coordinate the credit worthiness assessment process for current travel cardholders who transfer to the EPA from another federal agency.

- Complete and send (scan or fax) employees' applications (and signed employees' agreements) to the travel card contractor bank and file the signed the EPA memorandum of understanding in a secured location. Maintain the EPA memorandum of understanding consistent with records management schedules at http://www.epa.gov/records/policy/schedule/number.htm.

- Respond to any questions from employees concerning travel card policies and procedures.

- Assign proper authorization controls, such as, credit limit, transaction volume or individual transaction limit, to a travel card based on the credit assessment from the contractor bank or management's determination.

- Perform verifications and reviews, at least twice annually, to monitor cardholder statements and supporting documentation for delinquency, misuse and other improper transaction activities.[3]

- Review automated teller machine cash withdrawals, at least twice annually, to determine whether amounts withdrawn were consistent with authorized travel expense levels and for items or services associated with official travel.[4]

- Review monthly activity reports reflecting employees' accounts and travel advance transactions to verify that transactions are legal, proper and consistent with Federal rules and regulations. Take corrective action, for example, remove travel advance option. At a minimum, perform a monthly statistical sampling of accounts.[5]

- Provide the Cincinnati Finance Center with a quarterly report of travel card misuse or abuse, delinquency and disciplinary action taken in conjunction with travel card infractions.

- Subject to local bargaining union agreement, report suspected travel card abuse and delinquencies to employees' approving officials, typically employees' supervisors. Report suspected fraud to the EPA Office of Inspector General.

Director, Office of Financial Management may:

- Authorize a waiver from the EPA local travel rule, in unique situations, for the Office of the Chief Financial Officer employees, when necessary to allow lodging and per diem within the 50 mile local travel area of the official station to conduct official business.

- Approve, for agency employees, lodging and per diem within 50 miles of the official station *after* they incur travel expenses, *retroactive or after-the-fact travel.* The Inspector General or designee approves for his or her employees.

Funding Officials (Funds Control Officers)

- Verify availability of funds and proper authorizations on the travel request.

- Enter, maintain and verify account code information, e.g., document control prefix number, in the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system and fund travel authorizations upon receipt of the documents.

- Stamp "approved" on travel authorizations processed in the E-Gov Travel Service system or return authorizations not approved with appropriate comments related to availability or appropriate use of funding.[6]

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[3] Key Internal Control
[4] Key Internal Control
[5] Key Internal Control
[6] Key Internal Control

- Perform a review of the accounting information on local travel vouchers and stamps them "certified" or return them with appropriate comments.[7]

- Deobligate any remaining unliquidated obligations on travel authorizations and travel vouchers in the financial system when it has been determined that employees have cancelled their planned trips or have been fully reimbursed for their travel expenses.

Program or Regional Office Travel Coordinators

- Ensure compliance with the federal government regulations and the EPA requirements. Monitor the travel program.

- Provide travel guidance, e.g., travel authorization and travel voucher creation and approval, to employees in their offices, including guidance on the Federal Travel Regulation, the EPA travel policy or regional administrative policies and procedures.

- Serve as the liaison to the Cincinnati Finance Center on travel related matters.

- Maintain current routing lists with names of employees. Send official requests to the Cincinnati Finance Center to revise the lists used in the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system.

- Request routing changes from appropriate travel authorizing officials. Ensure that all correspondence, memorandum or email, is retained as documentation in the responsible office.

- Perform or facilitate user training on the E-Gov Travel Service system.

- Assist employees with interpretation of the Federal Travel Regulation rules and the EPA travel policy.

- Assist employees or travel preparers in the use of the E-Gov Travel Service system.

- Provide cross-funding accounting when more than one EPA office pays for travel.

- Regions only, manage the E-Gov Travel Service system Federal Agency Travel Administrator functions. When requested, the Cincinnati Finance Center manages these functions on behalf of program offices or regions. This includes routine maintenance of organizational and routing lists, account signatures, groups and employees' records and lines of accounting. Do not delete employees' records when employees leave the EPA to ensure appropriate record retention. The schedules for records are available at http://www.epa.gov/records/policy/schedule/number.htm

Senior Resource Officials

Receive notification from the Cincinnati Finance Center when employees do not respond to travel audit-related inquiries and forwards the notification to employees' supervisors for immediate action.

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[7] Key Internal Control

Travel Authorizing Officials

- Review, authorize and electronically route travel authorizations for employees to travel on behalf of the EPA, except for other than coach-class accommodations, which is first-class or business-class.[8] First-class and business-class accommodations require prior approval from delegated officials authorized in Delegations 1-17-A, 1-17-B and 17-C. This process includes an evaluation of the trip itinerary dates and times based on mission needs and what is most advantageous to the federal government.
- Review travel vouchers, based on knowledge of employees' activities, to ensure that:
  - Travel vouchers are properly prepared consistent with applicable federal government regulations, the EPA policy and procedures and ethical laws and regulations.
  - Expenses claimed are proper (authorized and allowable expenses).
  - Amounts claimed are reasonable.
  - Required receipts, statements, justifications and approvals are scanned and uploaded in the E-Gov Travel Service system.
  - Original Superfund, OIL Spill or Leaking Underground Storage Tank related travel documents and receipts are sent to the Cincinnati Finance Center.
- Authorize use of a federal government vehicle, privately owned vehicle, commercially rented vehicle or other special conveyance when advantageous to the federal government and consistent with ethics requirements.
- Review requests for exceptions to travel regulations, standards, procedures or interpretations and forward such requests to the appropriate offices, if deemed prudent.
- Review, authorize and route within five business days, after receiving the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system notification, travel vouchers to the Cincinnati Finance Center for payment certification.[9]
- Assist employees with access to relocation regulations and any other regulations about travel.
- Have proper authority to determine allowable travel for change of official station expenses. Must exercise care in planning relocation to ensure efficient use of time and money. Authorize only expenses that are absolutely essential to accomplish the objectives of the EPA programs or missions for change of official station that are in the best interest of the federal government. Determine the purpose and necessity of a relocation assignment, the means of transportation and discretionary reimbursements, where applicable.
- Sign appropriate documents to certify the review of the relocation package and to confirm that relocation is essential to accomplish the objectives of the EPA in an efficient and effective manner.

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[8] Key Internal Control

[9] Key Internal Control

- Inform employees of their transfer within a timeframe that provides sufficient time for employees to prepare for relocation.
- Assist, when necessary, new employees with the applicable limitations of travel relocation benefits.
- Ensure that employees have access to the EPA Federal Employee Relocation Center for correct information prior to their change of official station moves.
- Issue requests to the EPA Federal Employee Relocation Center to create travel authorizations for relocation *before* employees transfer to the new official station.
- Complete the same training and refresher training as travel cardholders, even if approving officials are not travel cardholders.
- Document misuse, abuse and delinquencies. Advise management officials of problems. In appropriate cases, e.g., fraudulent claims, advise the Office of Inspector General.
- Initiate administrative or disciplinary actions in the event travel cardholders fail to meet their responsibility with respect to appropriate use and timely payment of travel card billings, which the travel card contractor bank establishes. Initiate appropriate action for each occurrence of travel card misuse consistent with the EPA Order 3120.1, *Conduct and Discipline* and when applicable, collective bargaining agreement.

INDIVIDUALS

Employees

- Know and comply with the Federal Travel Regulation and the EPA policies for travel and relocation, when applicable to ensure proper claim for reimbursement of authorized travel or relocation expenses and to comply with applicable ethics requirements. The Federal Travel Regulation is available at http://www.gsa.gov/ftr. The EPA Resource Management Directive System 2550B, Official Travel is available at http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/policies/resource.htm.
- Exercise the same care in incurring travel and relocation expenses for the federal government as individuals use when traveling on personal business. Official business is never secondary to personal pleasure trips.
- For travel card users, successfully complete GSA travel card training prior to use of the travel card, and successfully complete the travel card refresher training every three years.
- *Should not* incur travel related expenses until travel authorizing officials approve the travel authorization and a document control number is available.
- If travel involves payment from a nonfederal or outside source, *should not* travel or otherwise incur travel related expenses until the Office of General Counsel Ethics official approves the gift of travel.
- Prepare their travel authorizations and travel vouchers. When employees request assistance, travel preparers perform some or all of these functions. However, employees remain responsible for the accuracy of statements and claims on their travel authorizations and travel vouchers.
- *Do not approve* their own travel authorization, their own travel voucher or their own travel

related justification documents.

- Track and monitor payment of their travel voucher and follow up with the Cincinnati Finance Center if they do not receive payment within seven business days after travel authorizing officials or designees' submission of the employees' travel vouchers to the Cincinnati Finance Center.
- Maintain travel preferences or personal profiles in the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system. Contact the Cincinnati Finance Center to request changes in address or banking information.
- Prepare, update and digitally sign travel documents in the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system using personal identification and password.
- Ensure that travel documents are routed and approved, and appropriate confirmations are received to allow timely processing of tickets.
- Retain required receipts and prepare travel vouchers within five business days of concluding a trip.[10] Required receipts under Federal Travel Regulation 301-11.25 include only lodging receipts and receipts for authorized expenses over $75. The GSA has advised that it is permissible for the EPA to have a more stringent policy on providing receipts than that contained in Federal Travel Regulation 301-11.25. The EPA has deemed it necessary for a more stringent policy. For a list of the EPA's required receipts, see *Section V. Prudent Travel Management, Administrative Guidelines, Receipts*. Note: if employees have bargaining unit status, guidelines for receipt retention follow the appropriate agreement established.
- Scan or fax *all* required receipts for travel expenses claimed into the E-Gov Travel Service system as attachments to travel vouchers, including those for Non-Site Specific Superfund, Oil or Leaking Underground Storage Tank related travel. Ensure that scanned documents and receipts are readable. If employees cannot scan or fax travel receipts and documents, they should contact the Cincinnati Finance Center Help Desk for assistance before mailing any documents. The telephone number is (513) 487-2346.
- Mail the original of Site Specific Superfund, Oil Spill or Leaking Underground Storage Tank related travel documents and receipts to the Cincinnati Finance Center. Retain, according to the proper retention period, a copy of all documents mailed to the Cincinnati Finance Center.
- Respond to requests from the Cincinnati Finance Center and provide complete information within timeframes the Cincinnati Finance Center establishes.
- Ensure cancellation, in the EPA's E-Gov Travel Service system, of all travel documents, e.g., travel authorization and travel related reservations, for trips that are postponed or cancelled. If assistance is required, contact the Cincinnati Finance Center Help Desk at (513) 487-2346.
- Do not travel abroad without permission from the Department of State. Employees should provide completed international trip plans to the Office of International and Tribal Affairs as early as possible, but, no later than 21 calendar days prior to departure. This timeframe allows the Department of State sufficient time to review and process a country clearance cable.
- Advise the Office of International and Tribal Affairs, through the program office or regional office's international travel coordinator, upon notification of an upcoming international trip, of

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[10] Key Internal Control

planned travel and the need for an official passport. Visa requirements vary from country to country and are subject to frequent change. Employees should contact the Office of International Tribal Affairs at least 30 days in advance of travel or earlier, due to the length of time many countries require to issue a visa.

- Review country security profile information for foreign travel. Access information at http://www.state.gov/travel.

Travel Preparers

At the request of travel authorizing officials or employees, travel preparers:

- Assist in preparing travel related documents, including travel for invitational travelers (non-EPA employees).
- Assist with cancellation of travel documents in the E-Gov Travel Service system and travel related reservations at the request of employees or supervisors.
- Assist with submission of required documentation, e.g., required receipts, justifications, audited or unaudited vouchers, into the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system.
- Ensure that all scanned documents and receipts are readable in the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system.

The EPA employees perform official travel consistent with applicable laws and in the most expeditious and economical means of transportation practicable to accomplish employees' duties. The EPA policy limits travel when the number of the EPA participants is disproportionate to the interest of the EPA or to its role in the meeting or other activity.

When official travel requires cancellation, employees or travel preparers must cancel transactions in the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system and all travel related reservations for the cancelled trip. Program offices and regions must ensure deobligation of appropriate travel funds for cancelled trips.

Additionally, employees or travel preparers must ensure that all required receipts for travel expenses claimed are scanned into the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system. Required receipts under Federal Travel Regulation 301-11.25 include only lodging receipts and receipts for authorized expenses over $75. The GSA has advised that it is permissible for the EPA to have a more stringent policy on providing receipts than that contained in Federal Travel Regulation 301-11.25. The EPA has deemed it necessary for a more stringent policy. The EPA's required receipts are listed under *Administrative Guidelines*, *Receipts*.

Authorized officials shall approve travel only after consideration of budget constraints, adherence to travel policies and applicable laws and reasonableness of costs. Alternatives to travel, such as teleconferencing and webinars, require consideration prior to requesting or authorizing travel. Officials who direct travel and authorize payments for reimbursement of travel expenses must exercise care in planning travel to ensure efficient use of time and money.

Authorized officials must ensure that travel is by the direct or usually traveled route to the temporary duty location. Use of indirect routes requires justification and approval. Employees are responsible for additional costs when indirect routes are for personal convenience.

Failure to follow federal government and the EPA travel regulations and policies causes delayed reimbursement, improper reimbursement or no reimbursement at all. Violations of travel regulations, including misuse of the travel card, could result in civil or monetary penalties and discipline up to and including dismissal from federal service.

For information regarding conduct and disciplinary matters, see the Office of Human Resources Intranet site at http://intranet.epa.gov/policy/conductdiscipline.htm. The Intranet site includes the EPA Order 3120.1, *Conduct and Discipline*, which contains the agency's policies and procedures dealing with these matters.

V. PRUDENT TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

Authorization for Official Travel

Employees or travel preparers must initiate a travel authorization for domestic and international, foreign and invitational foreign, travel as soon as employees have knowledge of an upcoming trip to support the agency's mission. The travel authorization is the tool the EPA uses to authorize official travel, provide funding or obligation for entitlements and record discretionary allowances.

All travel requires approval from proper travel authorizing officials or designees, prior to employees conducting official travel or incurring any costs associated with travel. Oral authorization of travel should only occur in emergencies or other legitimate circumstances when employees receive short notices, which do not allow for proper authorization in the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system to accomplish the EPA's mission. When oral authorization is given, travel authorizing officials or designees should follow up with a travel authorization, include a statement that travel is "post-approved" and explain why approval prior to travel was not possible. Oral authorization is acceptable for local travel that does not require a travel authorization, e.g., rental car or a waiver for per diem allowance.

Amendments to the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system travel authorization are necessary when the travel period is extended for one day or more; the itinerary is changed; total cost is increased by $500 or more; or other changes are made, which require special authorization. The reason for the change should be identified under itinerary, including an itemization of the increased cost. The amended travel authorization must be signed by travel authorizing officials delegated the authority to approve or direct travel.

To ensure prudent travel management for alternatives to travel, the EPA employees will use trip-by-trip authorization for official business. Trip-by-trip authorization allows employees to take one or more specific official business trips, which must include specific purpose, itinerary and estimated costs.

When necessary, only the Administrator and Deputy Administrator may use unlimited open and limited open authorizations. The unlimited open authorization allows travel for any official purpose without further authorization. Use of this type of authorization should only occur on an exception basis and then only when absolutely essential. When there is a need for the Administrator or Deputy Administrator to

use unlimited open authorization, a separate justification is required for each trip and documentation (purpose) must be maintained on file for each trip taken.

The limited open authorization allows travel on official business without further authorization under certain specific conditions, travel to specific geographic areas for specific purposes, subject to trip cost ceilings or for specific periods of time. General terms, such as "to conduct official business" are not acceptable for a limited open authorization. When there is a need for the Administrator and Deputy Administrator to use a limited open authorization, this type of authorization must not cover more than one fiscal year.

Retroactive or after-the-fact travel authorization requires approval from travel authorizing officials delegated the authority to approve or direct travel prior to the trip. The EPA Appendix A, *General Information* contains additional information on travel authorization.

Contractor and Assistance Agreement Travel

The EPA does not issue travel authorizations to individuals of agency contractors or financial assistance recipients. This includes enrollees participating in the Senior Environmental Employee grant programs and fellows or interns conducting research or receiving training in the EPA facilities. Contractors and financial assistance recipients must not use the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system to arrange travel. These individuals must arrange their travel and cover all costs associated with travel.

The EPA only reimburses contractors and financial assistance recipients for travel related costs to the extent their agreement, contract or assistance, with the EPA authorizes reimbursement. The agreement, contract or assistance, governs travel reimbursement not the EPA travel policy.

Enrollees, participating in the Senior Environmental Employee grant programs and fellows or interns conducting research or receiving training in the EPA facilities under financial assistance agreements, travel with funds provided by their assistance agreements rather than as federal employees or, with limited exceptions, as recipients of invitational travel orders. Contractors and financial assistance recipients must not use the E-Gov Travel Service system to arrange travel. These individuals must arrange their travel and cover all costs associated with travel.

Individuals employed under the Office of Research and Development Student Services Contracting authority are the exception to the EPA policy concerning contractors, financial assistance recipient employees or program participants. By statute, Chapter 57 of Title 5 U.S.C., Student Services Contractors are federal employees for the purposes of travel, provided they are performing tasks described in their scope of work.

Exceptions to the Federal Travel Regulation and the EPA Policies

The EPA employees, invitational travelers and authorizing officials must comply with the Federal Travel Regulation and the EPA policies and procedures. A designated official considers a waiver to the EPA policies and procedures when there are:

- Unique, not routine, circumstances to accomplish the agency's mission.
- Substantial cost savings to the agency.

For consideration of a waiver to the EPA travel policy, the Office Director or equivalent manager submits a written request to the appropriate Assistant Administrator or Deputy Assistant Administrator, Regional Administrator or Deputy Regional Administrator, General Counsel or the Chief Financial Officer according to delegated authority. See Delegations 1-17-A, 1-17-B and 1-17-C for specific authorities.

Any waiver granted for a temporary duty assignment requires attachment of the waiver to the travel authorization in the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system. Any retroactive or after-the-fact request requires approval from employees' travel authorizing officials delegated the authority to approve or direct travel prior to the trip.

Any retroactive or after-the-fact instances of nonfederal or outside source payment of the EPA employees' expenses must be reported to the Office of General Counsel Ethics official or the relevant Office of Regional Counsel immediately upon discovery for a determination regarding the propriety of accepting the gift of travel.

Excess Baggage

The EPA allows reimbursement for two personal bags for official travel. Specific notation is required on the travel authorization for the number of personal bags to be checked and associated baggage allowance. For associated baggage allowance, travel authorizing officials are responsible for determining the length and purpose of assignments, and the number of bags necessary for official documents or equipment. Federal Travel Regulation 301-12.2 provides a list of reimbursable expenses related to baggage.

Internal Control

The EPA follows the requirements contained in the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-123, *Management's Responsibility for Internal Control.* Access the EPA internal control guidance at http://intranet.epa.gov/fmdvally/management_integrity/.

Leave in Conjunction with Travel

Delegated officials or designees may approve leave in conjunction with official domestic and international temporary duty, if the federal government will not incur any additional costs. Key considerations in approving such travel include verifying that:

- Official travel is essential.
- The purpose of the travel is stated on the travel authorization as the sole reason for the trip at the federal government's expense.
- Any requested leave is purely incidental.
- Any leave taken will not delay any official business.

- Employees do not receive per diem while allowances while in leave status.

Employees on annual leave, traveling at personal expense, should not officially represent the EPA or use official passports. However, employees traveling at personal expense on unofficial business that is professionally related, which may indirectly benefit the EPA, may be provided administrative leave. Employees must complete Standard Form 71 *Request for Leave*, available under WebForms on the EPA Intranet. Additionally, the EPA official time and attendance system must reflect leave activity during travel status. For international travel, ensure that leave dates are on the international trip plan.

Payment of per diem or actual expenses is not allowed when employees are in leave status for more than one-half of the regular work day. Also, there is no payment of per diem or actual expenses when employees are in leave status for more than one-half of the regular work day immediately before or after non-work days, such as weekends or legal federal government holidays.

When official travel status includes non-work days, generally, employees may be reimbursed per diem or actual expenses. Travel authorizing officials should determine whether a required stay at the temporary duty location during non-work days is more cost effective than a return to the official station during non-work days.

Employees may use sick leave when they interrupt their temporary duty assignments because of an incapacitating illness or injury that occurs suddenly for reasons other than employees own misconduct and renders employees incapable of continuing, either temporarily or permanently, the travel assignment. Employees shall be allowed a per diem allowance not to exceed the maximum rate for the location where the interruption occurs. Such per diem may be continued for a reasonable period, normally not to exceed 14 calendar days, including fractional days, for any one period of absence. However, delegated officials or designees may approve a longer period, if justified.

Additionally, delegated officials or designees may allow transportation and per diem expenses for employees to travel to an alternate location to receive medical treatment; transportation and per diem expenses for employees to return to their official stations and transportation costs of a medically necessary attendant.

Under Federal Travel Regulation 301-30.4 and 301-30.5, employees will not receive reimbursement for expenses when (1) confined to a medical facility within the proximity of their official stations or the same medical facility employees would have been admitted if their incapacitating illnesses or injuries occurred at their official stations or (2) the federal government provides or reimburses employees for hospitalization under any Federal statute including hospitalization in a Department of Veterans Affairs Medical center or military hospital. Per diem expenses are payable if employees' hospitalization is paid under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (5 U.S.C. 8901-8913).

Leave Interruption for Return to Official Station

Employees who are on leave from their official station and are required to return to duty to perform official business receive reimbursement for the cost of returning to their official station and the cost of returning to leave after the official business is complete. Employees' prior knowledge of the need to return to the official station does not preclude the EPA from reimbursing employees.

The EPA is not authorized to reimburse employees for any personal losses sustained, such as the guaranteed cost of a hotel room while on vacation or fees for cancelled airline, train or ship reservations. Employees on leave at their official station do not receive reimbursement for local transportation costs.

Payment of Travel Expenses from Non-Federal or Outside Sources
Obtain Prior Approval from the Office of General Counsel

Pursuant to ethics requirements, employees must not solicit travel expenses from outside sources. Employees must seek approval from the Office of General Counsel Ethics official *prior to* accepting any invitation to conduct official agency business that an outside source, other than the federal government, pays. *The Office of General Counsel will not accept the "gift of travel" from any nonfederal source if the funds originate from any federal agency's contract or financial assistance agreements.*

Form 2610-3, *Approval to Accept Travel Under the Ethics Reform Act of 1989* and other information about the Office of General Counsel Ethics are available at http://intranet.epa.gov/ogc/ethics/travel.htm. Additionally, other information about the nonfederal or outside source payment process is available at http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/finservices/travel.htm

Personal Funds for Official Travel

Employees on official federal travel may not waive the right to reimbursement for official travel expenses under any circumstances, even if employees and supervisors agree that employees will not receive reimbursement from the EPA. Under 5 U.S.C. 5702 and 5 U.S.C. 5724(a) the agency must pay travel expenses for official travel. However, when travel is training related as authorized in the Government Employees Training Act, employees have the option to pay all or part of the necessary expenses of a training assignment, including travel expenses provided for in the Federal Travel Regulation, as the appropriate EPA training and travel authorizing officials decide.

Receipts

Agency policy requires the EPA employees to scan or fax into the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system receipts for:

- Lodging or hotel, regardless of the amount.
- Common carrier, e.g., air, rail or bus transportation, regardless of the amount.
- Rental car, regardless of the amount.
- Registration fees, regardless of the amount.
- Any other expense over $75.

If employees cannot scan or fax travel receipts and documents, they should contact the Cincinnati Finance Center Help Desk for assistance before mailing any documents. The telephone number is (513) 487-2346.

Alternatively, employees must provide a reason acceptable to appropriate travel authorizing officials why the necessary receipts are unavailable. Employees' original travel receipts should be maintained at the appropriate work location. If the Cincinnati Finance Center requires the originals, employees should make and retain copies of the originals mailed to the Cincinnati Finance Center. The GSA has advised that it is permissible for the EPA to have a more stringent policy on providing receipts than that contained in Federal Travel Regulation 301-11.25. The EPA has deemed it necessary for a more stringent policy.

Receipt Retention

Original receipts and documents for travel expenses require retention consistent with the Federal Travel Regulation, National Archives and Records Administration and the EPA policy. Original receipts that **are not** scanned into the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system must be retained for six years and three months. Electronic and scanned receipts – travel documents that have been uploaded into the EPA E-Gov Travel Services system – must be retained for 2 years. Additional information is available at http://www.archives.gov/about/records-schedule/chapter-07.html. Note: If employees have bargaining unit status, guidelines for retention of receipts follow the appropriate agreement established.

Reports to Oversight Agencies

Federal Travel Regulation Part 300-70, Subpart B requires reports on the use of all *other than coach-class,* first-class or business-class, accommodations that exceed the coach-class fare.

The Cincinnati Finance Center will request from the EPA's E-Gov Travel Service system provider an automated fiscal year or annual report on the use of first-class and business-class accommodations for the applicable fiscal year. The Cincinnati Finance Center will forward the report to the Financial Policy and Planning Staff in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer for review and submission to the GSA.

Submission of Travel Related Documents

Employees must scan or fax into the E-Gov Travel Service system all documents used to justify claims for reimbursement, in addition to specific required receipts, such as lodging and common carrier expenses. Examples of travel related documents:

- A memorandum of approval for a travel waiver or exemption.
- A copy of the travel cost comparison worksheet.
- Approved justification for purchase of supplies.

Supplies

Employees may purchase supplies and replacement parts for equipment that has malfunctioned, e.g. chargers for blackberries or laptop computers, so long as these supplies are necessary to perform official business while in travel status. If possible, employees should contact their authorized purchase bankcard holder to purchase supplies and replacement equipment to conserve travel funds. In situations in which it

is impractical to purchase the item(s) through the purchase bankcard, employees may purchase the item(s) with their travel card and claim the costs on their travel vouchers.

Employees must provide a justification, which shows that employees' supervisors or travel authorizing officials approved the purchase(s) prior to the travel or at least prior to the unanticipated purchase. If the amount of an unanticipated purchase exceeds $500, employees' travel authorizing officials must approve an amended travel authorization, which lists the item(s). Travel authorizing officials must not approve reimbursement for personal items such as clothing and umbrellas or "extra" equipment when employees fail to bring an item on travel.

Telephone Calls

Reimbursement for telephone calls is a discretionary allowance for the EPA. Travel authorizing officials determine whether telephone calls are reimbursable as a miscellaneous travel expense if employees incur an actual expense for official business calls, e.g., employees make calls to individuals at the employees' permanent duty station about mission requirements. Federal Travel Regulation 301-12.1, Miscellaneous Expenses includes an allowance for official business calls. Employees should use federal government provided services for all official communication. When these services are not available, commercial services may be used.

The EPA may reimburse employees for calls to home or to immediate family, as permissible, to express employees' safe arrival, inquire about medical conditions of a family member or provide changes to itinerary. Travel authorizing officials should limit the reimbursement for calls to home or immediate family to a daily amount, *up to* $6.00 for domestic travel or *up to* $12.00 for international travel. For example, if the amount for the call is $2.50 domestic or $7.50 international, the reimbursement is the actual amount, $2.50 or $7.50, *not the daily maximum $6.00 or $12.00.*

Travel authorizing officials and employees should discuss the reimbursable amount prior to the trip. If the expense is allowed, include a statement for reimbursement of telephone calls on the travel authorization. Travel authorizing officials determine after-the-fact or post-travel approval for telephone charges after completion of travel, when appropriate.

Additionally, any reimbursement requires that employees are on official travel and incur at least one night's lodging. Employees should use federal government provided services for official communications, when available.

When employees use personal cellular phones for official communication, employees must provide documentation to show that the additional cost exceeded the normal usage covered in the personal cellular phone contract. If no additional costs are shown on the cellular phone statement, no reimbursement is allowed. Prepaid communication services, e.g., prepaid phone cards, cellular phones or in-flight communication services are not reimbursable, unless employees provide documentation to travel authorizing officials that supports the claim that calls were used for official business.

Use of government-issued cellular phones, basic cellular phone or BlackBerry devices, is permissible for personal use while on official travel. Employees should use government-issued cellular phones in a manner that minimizes usage costs. Employees' use of government-issued cellular phones during official travel will prohibit claims for telephone calls on the travel voucher.

Text Messaging

Executive Order 13513, *Federal Leadership on Reducing Text Messaging While Driving* (October 1, 2009), prohibits federal employees from text messaging with any type of equipment while driving a vehicle during official travel. The EPA employees must comply with this executive order. Read the complete executive order at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2009-10-06/pdf/E9-24203.pdf.

Tips

Employees must limit tips claimed on their travel vouchers for a taxi, shuttle service or courtesy transportation to 15 percent of the charge for service. If there is no service charge, the EPA policy limits tips to $2 for a service. Employees should make maximum use of courtesy transportation, e.g., free airport or hotel shuttle service, in lieu of incurring charges for transportation. Approved tips are reimbursable as a transportation expense.

Incidental expenses, part of meals and incidental expenses, include fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, stewards or stewardesses and others on ships and hotel servants in foreign countries. No additional reimbursement is allowed.

Transit or Mass Transit Passes or Cards

Appropriated funds are available to purchase passes or cards for employees to attend local meetings. Program offices and regions must have controls in place to ensure that the passes or cards are not used for personal trips. Employees must not claim local travel expenses when they receive transit passes or cards to attend meetings.

CONFERENCE PLANNING

For guidance on conference planning, please refer to:

- The EPA's November 1998 *Best Practices Guide for Conferences.* http://intranet.epa.gov/ogd/policy/7.0-GPI-GPI-98-11.htm

- The GSA's Conference Planning Guidance in the Federal Travel Regulation at 41 CFR Part 301-74. Federal Travel Regulation Chapter 301 Appendix E

- The Office of General Counsel's October 1996 Ethics Advisory 96-15, *Guidance on Co-sponsoring Conferences.* http://intranet.epa.gov/ogc/ethics/96-15.pdf

- The EPA Order 1900.3 *Food at an EPA Conference, Workshop, Ceremony, Reception or Observance.* http://intranet.epa.gov/nerlintr/extramural/legalopinions/docs/foodorder1900_3.pdf

- The Office of General Counsel's *Frequently Asked Questions on Food and Light Refreshments.* http://intranet.epa.gov/ogc/memoranda/meals.pdf

- The Office of General Counsel's April 30, 2007, Memorandum *Light Refreshments for Non-Federal Individuals at Meetings.* See the EPA Appendix L for the memorandum.

Attendance at Conferences

Conferences that involve travel of 30 or more EPA employees must comply with procedures established in the Conference Spending Guide available one the intranet:
http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/conferences/documents/conference_spending_guide.pdf

Conferences at Resort Areas

When planning for the EPA sponsored or cosponsored conferences involving travel of the EPA employees, *do not avoid* locations that offer overall cost savings to the EPA, specifically during off-season, simply because they are resort areas. In all cases, especially for resort areas, program offices and regions should perform and retain records of cost comparison to determine the most cost effective location for official business. See the EPA Appendix E, *Sample Form for Travel Cost Comparison Worksheet.*

Government Employees Training Act

The Government Employees Training Act, 5 U.S.C. 4109(a) (2) (A) and (B), governs travel, per diem and transportation expenses relating to training. This statute authorizes the EPA to pay all or part of the travel expenses associated with training. Unlike temporary duty travel, employees traveling for training purposes are not entitled to reimbursement for all of their travel expenses. The EPA officials, with authority under Delegation 1-105, *EPA Training and Learning* to approve training assignments, decide the travel expenses the EPA will pay for employees assigned to training. Employees may pay for a portion of their training related travel expenses provided an EPA training officer has determined that the activity qualifies as training under the Government Employees Training Act. That portion may be as high as 100 percent.

Under 5 U.S.C. 4111, another provision of the Government Employees Training Act, employees may accept travel and other expenses incident to attendance at meetings from organizations exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. However, employees may be required to report such gifts of travel on their financial disclosure reports.

LODGING AND PER DIEM

The EPA employees should travel on a lodgings-plus system, except in limited, unusual situations when a conference lodging allowance, reduced per diem or actual expense reimbursement is specifically authorized or approved for the particular trip. Under the lodgings-plus per diem system, per diem allowances (for each travel day) authorize the actual amount employees pay for lodging, plus an allowance for meals and incidental expenses and the total does not exceed the applicable maximum per diem rate for the temporary duty location.

Under Federal Travel Regulation 301-50.3, employees must make domestic lodging reservations through the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system. Employees should always stay in a fire safe facility that meets the fire safety requirements of the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990 (the Act), as amended (see 5 U.S.C. 5707(a)).

When selecting a commercial domestic lodging facility (not occupying a room in the home of relatives or friends), employees should give first consideration to federal government lodging agreement programs such as FedRooms® (http://www.fedrooms.com). The advantages of obtaining lodging through the FedRooms® program:

- Lodging rates set at or below per diem rates.
- No add-on fees.
- Room cancellation deadline is 4 p.m. or later on the day of arrival.
- Most hotels offer last standard room availability rates.
- No early departure fees.
- Rates are available through all booking channels, such as the federal E-Gov Travel Service, Travel Management Service and FedRooms® website and hotel reservation call centers. Employees must enter FedRooms® rate code, XVU, to get the program benefits previously listed.

The requirement to book lodging accommodations through the EPA Travel Management Center does not apply when a conference sponsor has negotiated with one or more lodging facilities to set aside a specific number of rooms for conference attendees. To ensure that the set aside rooms are used, direct booking, by attendees, with the specific lodging facility is required. In this instance, use of a Travel Management Center is not mandatory.

Actual Expenses

Appropriate travel authorizing officials or designees determine whether to approve actual expenses. Approval must not exceed the maximum percentage allowed in the Federal Travel Regulation. Exceptional situations must exist to receive the maximum per diem for the locality, e.g., increased costs due to special events at the temporary duty location, natural disasters.

Approval requires specific notation on the travel authorization. Travel requests with per diem above 150% of established rate for the TDY location require second line supervisor approval, prior to occurrence of TDY travel, in EPA's E-Gov Travel System. When travel authorizing officials approve expenses after the completion of the trip, an amendment to the travel authorization is required. Authorizing officials must comply with Delegation 1-17A, 1-17-B or 1-17-C.

When travel includes a combination of per diem and actual expenses, travel authorizing officials should ensure that only one method of reimbursement is authorized within a calendar day. Reimbursement will be the method and rate applicable where employees are located at midnight, at the end of the calendar day.

The reimbursement rate and method used for the day of departure from the official station must be the one authorized for the first location where lodging is required. For the day of return to the official

station, apply the method and maximum rate of reimbursement applicable to the location of the previous day.

High Dollar Travel

Travel with total trip expenses greater than $5,000 require approval from the Senior Resource Official. The EPA's E-Gov Travel System has conditional routing which requires mandatory SRO approval for all travel requests with expenses greater than $5,000.

Reduced Per Diem

Employees must use reduced per diem when travel authorizing officials determine in advance that lodging or meal cost is lower than the per diem rate and travel authorizing officials include the lowest authorized per diem rate on the travel authorization in advance of employees' travel. When employees receive a gift of a meal but not light refreshments during travel, then the employees must reduce their per diem accordingly.

When employees are in temporary duty status for more than 30 consecutive days, travel authorizing officials may only approve a reduced per diem rate that starts at 55 percent with the option to negotiate the percentage as long a reduction is taken for per diem. The reduced per diem rate must be included on the travel authorization.

Employees must also reduce per diem claims when the EPA or another federal agency pays for a meal at a formal conference, training workshop or similar event through a contract or otherwise. See Federal Travel Regulation 301-74.21(a). Additionally, employees must, as a matter of policy, reduce per diem claims when an EPA financial assistance recipient uses agency funds to furnish a meal at an event. Employees need not reduce per diem claims for light refreshments paid for with federal funds according to Federal Travel Regulation 301-74.21(b).

Federal Travel Regulation 301-11.18 grants discretionary authority to an agency to determine when full claim for meals and incidental expenses is allowed. The EPA travel authorizing officials may allow the employees full claim for meals and incidental expenses if:

- Employees are unable to consume the furnished meal(s) because of medical requirements or religious beliefs; employees requested specific approval to claim the full meals and incidental expenses allowance prior to their travel; employees made a reasonable effort to make alternative meal arrangements, but were unable to do so and employees purchased substitute meals in order to satisfy their medical requirements or religious beliefs.

- Employees were unable to take part in a government furnished meal due to the conduct of official business.

Timeshare Lodging

If timeshare units, occupied while on temporary duty, belong to employees; there is no reimbursement for lodging expenses. Conversely, if employees do not own the timeshare units, employees receive reimbursement for the exchange cost of timeshare accommodations up to the maximum lodging

allowance for the temporary duty locality. See Federal Travel Regulation 301-11.12(c) for limitations when friends or relatives provide lodging for employees.

TRAVEL ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations refer to the class or type of seating options the transportation industry, e.g., airline or train, offers to employees. The EPA employees must comply with the Federal Travel Regulation and the EPA policy on travel arrangements.

Coach-Class

The EPA employees must use coach-class accommodations for official travel unless delegated officials grant an exception for a higher class.[11] The section below provides additional information.

Other than Coach-Class (First-Class or Business-Class)

The Federal Travel Regulation term *other than coach-class* refers to first-class or business-class accommodations for airplane, train or ship in lieu of coach-class. The EPA officials delegated the authority to review and approve other than coach-class accommodations are in Delegations 1-17-A, 1 17-B and 1-17-C. The GSA and the OMB set requirements for other than coach-class accommodations.

The GSA Federal Travel Regulation (301-10.123) is available at http://www.gsa.gov/ftr. The OMB requirements (m08-07) for internal controls for other than coach-class accommodations are available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/fy2008/m08-07.pdf. [12]

A request for a waiver to use other than coach-class (first-class) accommodations requires a memorandum from employees' Office Directors or equivalents to the Chief Financial Officer or designee for approval of first-class accommodations. The Inspector General or designee approves for his or her employees. Additionally, a request for a waiver to use other than coach-class (business-class) accommodations requires a memorandum from the employees' Office Directors or equivalents to appropriate delegated officials for approval of business-class accommodations.

The Chief Financial Officer or designee must receive requests for first-class accommodations at least 10 business days prior to official travel. Send requests as portable document formats in email. All correspondence must be retained as documentation in the responsible office. The request must comply with the criteria for other than coach-class accommodations in Federal Travel Regulation 301-10.123.

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[11] Key Internal Control

[12] Key Internal Control

The following chart provides a quick guide for officials with delegated authority (see column 2).

Travel Accommodations	
Class of Transportation	**Approve/Authorize**
Other than Coach-Class **(Business-Class)** for Administrator; Deputy Administrator; Assistant Administrator; Regional Administrator;	Chief Financial Officer; Deputy Chief Financial Officer; May delegate to Director, Office of Financial Management (requires written delegation)
Other than Coach-Class **(Business-Class)** for All other employees*	Deputy Chief of Staff for the Office of the Administrator employees; Assistant Administrator/Deputy Assistant Administrator for their employees; Regional Administrator/Deputy Regional Administrator for their employees; Chief Financial Officer for the Office of the Chief Financial Officer employees; May delegate only to the Senior Resource Official for employees at the same level (position) or below (requires written delegation)
Other than Coach-Class **(Business-Class or First-Class)** for Chief Financial Officer	Deputy Administrator
Other than Coach-Class **(Business-Class or First-Class)** for Deputy Chief Financial Officer	Chief Financial Officer
Other than Coach-class **(First-Class)** for All other employees*	Chief Financial Officer; Deputy Chief Financial Officer; May delegate to Director, Office of (requires written documentation)
* The Office of Inspector General approves travel accommodations for its employees.	

Coach-Class Seating Upgrade Programs

Federal Travel Regulation 301-10.124 identifies upgrade programs as "Coach Elite," "Coach Plus" or "Preferred Coach" that provide a more desirable seat choice within coach-class but at an annual fee. The use of these upgrades generally satisfies employees' personal choices. Therefore, the use of the upgrades is a personal expense for employees. The EPA will not reimburse this expense.

Travel in Excess of 14 Hours

Travel authorizing officials should allow rest periods when travel is direct between authorized origin and destination points which are separated by several time zones and either the origin or destination point is outside the continental United States and the flight time, including stopovers, is in excess of 14 hours. If use of other than coach-class accommodations is authorized employees are not eligible for a rest stop en route or a rest period upon arrival. See Federal Travel Regulation 301-10.125 for additional information on the 14-hour rule.

The EPA considers a "rest stop" to be a break in TDY travel while en route to the TDY destination. A "rest stop" is defined as personal time on either end of TDY travel that permits the traveler to rest before reporting for duty. When TDY involves OCONUS travel and the scheduled flight time, including non-overnight airport stopovers and plane changes, exceeds 14 hours, a rest stop of no more than 24 hours may be authorized. A rest stop allows for relaxation, recuperation, and acclimation so a traveler is sufficiently refreshed to perform work upon arrival at the travel destination site. The following criteria must be met when authorizing a rest stop:

- The origin or destination is OCONUS, and
- Travel is direct between points and the accommodations are coach class.

The rest stop may be authorized at any intermediate point, including points within CONUS, provided the point is midway in the journey or as near to midway as scheduling permits. A rest stop will not be authorized when a traveler, for personal convenience, elects to travel by an indirect route resulting in excess travel time.

If a rest stop is authorized, it will be clearly indicated and detailed on the travel authorization. For the purposes of reimbursement, the per diem rate for the rest stop location must be used. If the carrier schedule or the requirement to use U.S. flag carriers precludes an intermediate rest stop, or a rest stop is not authorized, the traveler should schedule coach-class accommodations so as to ensure arrival at the TDY site with sufficient time to permit a reasonable rest period before reporting for duty.

The EPA may authorize business-class accommodations in lieu of a rest stop. However, the duration of a flight alone (14 or more hours) does not justify authorizing premium class. When considering premium-class accommodations for trips over 14 hours, approving officials should consider:

- The constructive cost, e.g., the cost of business-class accommodations versus the cost of coach-class accommodations plus the cost of reimbursements in conjunction with a rest stop; and

- The purpose and urgency of the trip, e.g., whether the trip is so urgent or unexpected that it cannot be delayed or postponed, and the traveler is unable to schedule either a rest stop en route or an earlier flight that would allow for a rest period before having to report for duty.

The analysis regarding the 14-hour rule must be applied when the scheduled flight time from origin to final destination exceeds 14 hours, including stopovers and change of planes. Authorization of premium-class accommodations for the outbound part of the trip does not automatically justify the use of premium

accommodations for the return trip. Authorizing officials should consider all the same tests regarding the critical nature of the travel, authorizing rest stops, and the availability of rest periods.

The EPA will not authorize premium-class accommodations when the traveler is not required to report for duty the following day, whether at the official station or a TDY location, unless there are medical needs that have been certified by a competent medical authority and confirmed by an EPA Reasonable Accommodations Coordinator. When annual leave is approved at the TDY location before the start of official business, neither a rest stop nor premium-class accommodations are authorized, unless there are medical needs that have been certified by a competent medical authority and the EPA's Reasonable Accommodations Coordinators.

Other than Coach Class Travel Exception:

FTR 301-10.123(a)(2) requires annual certifications of a disability or special need, or a one-time certification if the disability is a lifelong condition, for use of other than coach-class. To be eligible for consideration for other than coach-class accommodations, an employee shall request such accommodations via the Agency Reasonable Accommodation Procedures. For further information, please contact the EPA's Office of Civil Rights or consult the EPA's Reasonable Accommodation Procedures for Employees and Applicants with Disabilities at http://intranet.epa.gov/civilrights/reasonableaccommodation.htm.

Other than Coach Class Travel Exception: Agency Mission

The EPA anticipates that it would be highly unusual and there would be very few instances where "agency mission" would justify other than coach-class travel accommodations. Instances where it would be appropriate would generally be circumstances in which matters would be highly sensitive and time-critical.

Requests for other than coach-class travel accommodations based on "agency mission" require written approval by the following official:

- For the Office of the Administrator, the Senior Resource Official.
- For all other regions or programs, the Assistant Administrator or Regional Administrator.

A full written justification must be included which describes the exceptional nature of the mission requirements, and why alternatives which would allow the use of coach-class travel accommodations are not sufficient. In no case may a request be based upon a traveler's grade or position. A request for other than coach-class travel will not be approved when a traveler chooses, for personal or other non-official reasons, an alternative schedule or indirect route which gives rise to the need for upgraded travel accommodations to allow enhanced rest or working conditions.

"Agency mission" exception generally involves circumstances where travelers have unanticipated responsibilities or significant workload issues which make functioning after travel difficult without an upgrade. The following situations generally do not fall within the "agency mission" exception:

- Delivery of a speech;
- Participation in a training or conference;

- Routine agency business during normal work hours; and
- Attendance at luncheons, dinners, and other such events.

TRAVEL ADVANCES

Under Federal Travel Regulation 301-51.1, the travel card is the required method for payment of all official travel expenses, unless employees have received exemptions. The use of the travel card minimizes the need for travel advances. Travel authorizing officials should consider travel advances on a case-by-case basis. Travel authorizing official should comply with the requirements under Federal Travel Regulation Subpart C, *Receiving Travel Advances*, 301-51.200 – 301-51.203.

Employees must not use travel advances for personal use. Employees who receive advances should promptly notify their travel authorizing officials when trips are postponed or canceled. Employees must repay any portion of their travel advance not used for reimbursable expenses.

TRAVEL CARD

The EPA follows the Federal Travel Regulation for mandatory use of a travel card for expenses directly related to official travel. Federal Travel Regulation 301-51, *Paying Travel Expenses*, provides the list of travel expenses exempt from the use of the travel card. This link, Federal Travel Regulation Part 301-51, provides the list. The EPA Appendix A, *General information* provides additional information for the travel card.

The Agency Program Coordinators, travel cardholders, approving officials for travel card participants and other accountable or billing officials must receive the travel card training required in the OMB Circular A-123, Management's Responsibility for Internal Control, Appendix B (Revised 2009), *Improving the Management of Government Charge Card Programs*. The GSA provides travel card online training and refresher training on its website at https://smartpay.gsa.gov/program-coordinators/training. Refresher training is necessary every three years or when changes in processes occur.[13] Copies of all training certificates are maintained consistent with the EPA records management policies. Read the policy at http://www.epa.gov/records/policy/index.htm.

New employees, including employees who leave federal government service and return to the EPA, must undergo a credit worthiness assessment or credit check. See section below on *Credit Worthiness*. Current EPA travel cardholders, prior to the effective date of this policy, receive an exemption from this requirement.

Employees may request not to participate in (opt-out) the travel card program. Employees must submit written requests to their appropriate official, e.g., Assistant Administrator, Regional Administrator, General Counsel and Chief Financial Officer, for consideration. Federal Travel Regulation 301-51.2 exempts employees, who travel 5 times or less a year, from the mandatory use of the travel card, but allows federal agencies the discretion to issue cards to these employees. The EPA allows its senior officials to make the decision for their respective employees.

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[13] Key Internal Control

Employees who request travel cards must sign an EPA memorandum of understanding to confirm that they have read and understand the terms and conditions of travel card program. These employees agree to use the travel card for only officially authorized federal government travel. Employees receive travel cards mailed to their home addresses as the travel card contractor bank directs. Additionally, the EPA travel cardholders must:

- Not use the travel card for personal purchases.
- Pay undisputed travel card bills according to the due date reflected on the billing statement. The travel card contractor bank's billing cycle or due date may occur before travel cardholders receive reimbursement for their travel claim. Under Federal Travel Regulation 301-52.24, travel cardholders are not relieved of their obligation to pay the billing amount. The EPA travel cardholders must pay the billing amount even in those instances when the EPA travel payment process does not coincide with the travel card contractor bank's billing cycle.
- Assume personal responsibility for all undisputed charges made to their travel card even when the charges exceed the amount they will receive for reimbursement.
- Immediately report lost or stolen cards to the travel card contractor bank.
- Directly notify the travel card contractor bank of any change in address.
- Immediately notify the Agency Program Coordinator of any mistaken use of the travel card.
- Notify the Agency Program Coordinator at the new official stations to ensure that their accounts transfer to the new official stations.

Credit Worthiness

The EPA requires credit worthiness assessments for new travel card applicants as provided in the OMB A-123, Appendix B (Revised 2009) *Improving the Management of Government Charge Card Programs*. Travel cardholders who received travel cards prior to the effective date of this travel policy are *exempt* from the credit assessment requirement.

The travel card contractor bank, consistent with the requirements in the OMB A-123, requests credit worthiness assessments, credit checks, on behalf of the EPA. Credit agencies define assessments as *soft hits* that do not affect applicants' (e.g., the EPA travel cardholders') credit rating in any way. According to credit agencies, there is no limit to the number of times applicants may receive a *soft hit* credit worthiness inquiry from the travel card contractor bank.

Declining the Use of the Travel Card

If employees choose not to participate in (opt-out) the travel card program, employees must send a request to their appropriate official, for example, their Assistant Administrator, Regional Administrator, General Counsel or Chief Financial Officer, explaining the reason for nonparticipation in the travel card program. If the employees' officials concur that employees have a valid reason, the officials may grant a waiver of rights to the travel card. Waivers require documentation and maintenance in the appropriate

officials' files consistent with the EPA records management policies. Read the information at http://www.epa.gov/records/policy/manual.

When eligible employees decline the travel card, travel cash advance limitations are the same as those for travel cardholders. Employees who decline the travel card must charge official common carrier tickets to the EPA's centrally billed account.

Registration Fees

Travel cardholders should not use the travel card for registration fees associated with temporary duty travel. Rather, travel cardholders should make arrangements for the EPA to pay registration fees through a purchase bankcard transaction, a purchase order or a Standard Form 182 *Training Authorization Form* for events that qualify as training. Under extremely unusual circumstances, travel cardholders pay for registration fees with the travel card and *only* with prior approval from employees' travel authorizing officials.

Registration fees require proper justification on the travel authorization to explain the use of the travel card. Employees claim reimbursement as a miscellaneous expense on the travel voucher. Unique situations for use of the travel card include:

- Cash (use travel card for automated teller machine withdrawal) is necessary to pay the registration fee.
- Agency does not pay registration fee in advance.
- Other reasons beyond employees' control that travel authorizing officials accept.

Salary Offset

Section 4.4 of the OMB A-123, Appendix B, (Revised 2009), *Improving the Management of Government Charge Card Programs* mandates salary offset for delinquent travel cardholders. Salary offset is defined in section 4.4.2 as the collection of an undisputed, delinquent travel card amount through direct deduction from employees' payroll disbursement or retirement annuity on behalf of the travel card contractor bank.

When the travel card contractor bank submits notification that travel cardholders have delinquent balances, the EPA determines whether to initiate salary offset. The EPA only collects undisputed delinquent amounts after the EPA reimburses travel cardholders for travel expenses under the applicable travel regulations and consistent with a proper travel claim.

The EPA travel cardholders must pay their financial obligations within the timeframe the travel card contractor bank establishes. Travel authorizing officials, in consultation with the Agency Program Coordinator, will take the necessary steps for appropriate disciplinary action based on the EPA's *Conduct and Discipline Manual,* the EPA Order 3110.6B *Adverse Actions* and applicable collective bargaining agreement. Read the EPA Order 3110.6B on the EPA OHR Intranet at http://intranet.epa.gov/policy/conductdiscipline.htm.

Split Disbursement

Section 4.4 of the OMB A-123, Appendix B (Revised 2009) *Improving the Management of Government Charge Card Programs* mandates split disbursement for travel cardholders. Split disbursement is defined in Section 4.4.1 as a process that divides reimbursements (travel voucher payments) between the travel card contractor bank and travel cardholders.

The EPA requires travel cardholders to indicate on their travel vouchers an amount to directly pay the travel card contractor bank. At a minimum, split disbursement requires direct payment for common carrier transportation, lodging or hotel costs and all proper transaction fees, for example, related E-Gov Travel Service system charges for official travel service. The Cincinnati Finance Center will not process a travel voucher without an amount shown to pay the travel card contractor bank.

The Cincinnati Finance Center will contact travel cardholders for an amount to send the travel card contractor bank. After contacting travel cardholders, the Cincinnati Finance Center sends the amount the travel cardholders designate to the travel card contractor bank. The remaining balance goes to the travel cardholders' personal bank accounts via electronic funds transfer.

If travel cardholders designate amounts that do not cover all payments due to the travel card contractor bank, travel cardholders must pay the additional amounts that appear on their applicable travel card billing statements. Travel cardholders must pay any undisputed outstanding balances in full each month. The travel card contractor bank does not allow extended or partial payments. The Cincinnati Finance Center reimburses employees and travel cardholders for allowable expenses consistent with the Prompt Payment Act under Federal Travel Regulation Part 301-52.

In summary, split disbursement or split pay is a federal government requirement. Travel cardholders who apply a split pay amount to their vouchers will send that portion directly to the travel card contractor bank to pay the bill. This is especially helpful for fees and charges that are automatically billed to the travel card, such as the Travel Management Center fee and airline ticket.

The split pay process is one of the last steps for travel cardholders when processing their vouchers. All per diem and expenses should already be entered in the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system and accurate before entering the split pay amount. Travel cardholders should enter the amount they owe on their travel cards and that amount will be sent to the travel card contractor bank to pay the bill. The remainder will be deposited into the travel cardholders' personal bank accounts.

Split Disbursement and Salary Offset Waiver Procedures

Section 4.4.3 of the OMB A-123, Appendix B (Revised 2009) provides waiver procedures. Split disbursement and salary offset are mandatory. However, agencies may waive or provide for an exemption when the agencies determine that the cost of implementing split-disbursement or salary offset exceeds the benefits of implementation.

Travel Card Contractor Bank

Travel cardholders should contact the travel card contractor bank using the telephone number provided on monthly billing statement or back of travel card for all questions relating to:

- Stolen cards (also inform the appropriate Agency Program Coordinator and travel authorizing official).
- Forgotten personal identification numbers.
- Automated teller machine locations.
- Disputes (also inform the appropriate Agency Program Coordinator and travel authorizing official).

Use of Cash for Payment of Common Carrier Transportation

Under Federal Travel Regulation 301-51.100, employees may use cash, not to exceed $100, to purchase airline, rail or bus transportation. Personal credit cards, personal checks and travelers' checks are equivalent to cash.

Employees must obtain a waiver prior to official travel for purchase of common carrier transportation in excess of $100. In the request for a waiver, employees must justify the use of cash in excess of $100. Employees must submit the request to the appropriate official listed in Delegation 1-17-A or 1-17-C.

TRAVEL MODES

Airline

Generally, travel by commercial air is the most advantageous mode of transportation for conducting official business. When commercial air travel is not available, travel authorizing officials determine the most expeditious and cost effective, including expense and time, mode of travel to accomplish the EPA's mission.

Bicycle

The transportation of a privately owned bicycle for personal use is not allowed at federal government expense. The EPA must only pay those expenses essential to the performance of official business. If employees want to transport a personal bicycle to a temporary duty location, travel authorizing officials must determine whether it is in the interest of the federal government, e.g., necessary to perform official business. If allowed, a cost comparison is necessary – compare appropriate airline baggage fee versus rental fee at the temporary duty location for a bicycle. The EPA will reimburse employees the lesser amount. Any additional expenses are the responsibility of employees.

A rental bicycle at the temporary duty location requires approval from travel authorizing officials after determining costs, including additional or less official time of employees to use bicycle, compared to subway, bus, taxi or other transportation at the temporary duty location. The approval must state that a rental bicycle is in the interest of the federal government. If employees intend to use the rental bicycle for personal use, travel authorizing officials must deduct the cost of personal use from total costs. Approval requires specific notation on the travel authorization.

Federal Government Aircraft

The EPA's use of a federal government aircraft, chartered or federal government owned, must comply with the OMB Circular A-126. The EPA must need the service to fulfill a mission requirement, exceptional scheduling, communication or security requirements, or there is a substantial cost savings to the federal government. The GSA implemented the OMB Circular A-126 guidelines in Federal Travel Regulation 301-10.261 through 301-10.264.

Any use of a federal government aircraft, other than for mission requirements, by the Administrator and other "senior federal officials" as defined in the OMB Circular A-126 requires approval in advance, in writing from the General Counsel or the Principal Deputy General Counsel on a trip-by-trip basis. The General Counsel or Principal Deputy General Counsel must also approve the use of federal government aircraft by family members of senior federal officials and nonfederal travelers. The Cincinnati Finance Center must semiannually report the use of chartered aircraft for senior EPA officials and nonfederal travelers to the GSA.

Federal Government Vehicle

When common carrier transportation is not advantageous to the federal government and an automobile is necessary for official travel, travel authorizing officials may authorize the use of a federal government vehicle whenever it is reasonably available. For example, employees use a federal government vehicle to travel to temporary duty at nearby locations other than their official station. Under 31 U.S.C. 1344, federal government vehicles may not be used for home to work transportation unless employees are engaged in "field work" as authorized by the Administrator or the Administrator authorizes an exception based on an emergency or other extraordinary situation.

Privately Owned Vehicle

A privately owned vehicle is a privately owned airplane, automobile, truck or motorcycle. The EPA travel authorizing officials must determine when use of a privately owned vehicle for official travel is advantageous to the federal government. Approval requires specific notation on the travel authorization prior to travel. When authorized to use a privately owned vehicle for official travel, employees' reimbursement includes mileage to and from the official destination not to exceed the cost of common carrier transportation. Employees are responsible for indirect route travel expenses. The applicable mileage reimbursement rate is available at www.gsa.gov/mileage.

A cost comparison is necessary when employees use a privately owned vehicle instead of common carrier. The travel authorization must state that costs will not exceed the cost of common carrier transportation plus per diem. The EPA Appendix E, *Sample Form for Travel Cost Comparison Worksheet*, provides assistance with determining the most advantageous method of travel.

Rental Car

Travel authorizing officials must determine when use of a rental car, including type or size, such as economy or compact, is advantageous to the federal government for official travel. Approval requires specific notation on the travel authorization.

When authorized to use a rental vehicle, employees should consider renting a vehicle from a vendor that participates in the Defense Travel Management Office's U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement to receive the Agreement's benefits, including insurance and damage liability provisions; unless employees are outside the continental United States and no agreement is in place for the employees' temporary duty location. Additional information is available at http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/rental.cfm. A list of participating rental car vendors is available at http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/CRAgreementPOCs.pdf. The advantages of renting a car through the Defense Travel Management Office rental car program:

- Pre-negotiated car rental agreements.
- Agreement includes automatic unlimited mileage and collision damage insurance.
- Vendor does not exceed rates established in the car rental agreement.

When employees are involved in an accident or receive damage to a rental vehicle while on temporary duty, the employees should perform basic steps:

- Notify the rental company and request a replacement car, if necessary. The contact information is available on the documentation for the rental car.
- Notify the police and obtain a police report for the rental company. If a police report is not available, employees should provide sufficient information to the rental company, e.g., all information received from the parties involved in the accident.
- Complete an accident report with the rental company.
- Keep a record of the location of the rental company and its representatives who assisted with the paperwork.
- Report the incident to the proper EPA travel authorizing officials.

Any passengers who are not federal government employees, contractors, family members, friends or others may not drive the rental vehicle unless additional insurance coverage is available and purchased at employees' expense through the car rental company or passengers' names are on the authorized order, for example, family members on permanent change of official station travel. The federal government generally does not reimburse expenses for personal accident insurance, unless it is mandatory for travel outside the continental United States.

When alternative fuel vehicles or hybrid vehicles are available through the Defense Travel Management Office car rental agreement, travel authorizing officials should consider these vehicles to determine if they are advantageous to or in the interest of the federal government. If alternative fuel vehicles are not available through the Defense Travel Management Office car rental agreement, travel authorizing officials should approve the smallest, most fuel-efficient vehicle necessary to meet the EPA's mission.

Travelers should refuel rental vehicles prior to returning. Prepaid fuel on rental vehicles is NOT a reimbursable expense. Claims for prepaid fuel will be removed from travel vouchers. The full rule can be read at the following link http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-05-13/pdf/2015-11459.pdf

Train

AMTRAK extra-fare travel in the continental United States requires approval from travel authorizing officials, and may be used when advantageous to the federal government or is necessary for security reasons. The lowest class of service available on any AMTRAK Acela Express or Metroliner train service (including Acela Express) is business-class and is advantageous to the federal government. For AMTRAK Acela Express or Metroliner train service, the EPA does not require additional approval from delegated officials.

Additionally, extra-fare train travel outside the continental United States requires approval from travel authorizing officials, and may be used when advantageous to the federal government or necessary for security reasons. However, for domestic or international travel, if the lowest class available is first-class, travel authorizing officials must comply with the Federal Travel Regulation and the EPA requirements for use of other than coach-class accommodations (first-class).

Employees are liable for additional costs when they use AMTRAK or train services for personal convenience instead of the transportation method travel authorizing officials approve. See Federal Travel Regulation 301-10.6 and 301-10.8.

TRAVEL SERVICES

E-Gov Travel Service

The EPA employees must use the EPA E-Gov Travel Service to make travel arrangements. The E-Gov Travel Service is a federal government Web based service designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the federal government's travel program. E-Gov Travel Service is the generic name for the service provider included in the GSA contract and the EPA selected provider for its travel service. Use of E-Gov Travel Service ensures compliance with the Federal Travel Regulation and reduces employees' travel spending, but still allows the employees to meet their mission.

Consistent with Federal Travel Regulation 301-50.4, the EPA delegated officials or designees may grant, on a case-by-case basis, an exception to the required use of the EPA E-Gov Travel Service when employees' travel meets one of these conditions:

- Use of the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system would result in an unreasonable burden on mission accomplishment, e.g., emergency travel is involved and the Travel Management Center or the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system is not accessible, the trip is invitational travel or travel of employees with specials needs. See Federal Travel Regulation 301-13. The EPA *Emergency Travel Guidance*, issued in 2006, is still in effect and available at http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/finservices/emergency_travel_guide.pdf.

- Use of the E-Gov Travel Service system would compromise a national security interest.

- Use of the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system might endanger employees' lives, e.g., travel related to the federal witness protection program or for a threatened law enforcement/investigative officer.

Access the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system at https://govtrip.com/govtrip/site/index.jsp. For additional information on travel and the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system, access http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/finservices/travel.htm. The EPA Appendix A, *General Information* also contains information.

Travel Management Center

The EPA requires all employees to use its Travel Management Center for official travel, including transportation and lodging, except for the authorized reservation of a block of rooms or for emergency situations where it is impractical. Transportation for common carriers includes airline and rental car. For invitational travelers, travel preparers must use Travel Management Center for common carrier reservations only.

The EPA will reimburse employees for all official travel related transaction fees incurred in the use of the Travel Management Center for travel services. Employees will not receive reimbursement for transaction fees incurred for personal preference or convenience.

Use of City Pair Program

The EPA is a mandatory user of the GSA City-Pair contract. Employees on official business must use the contract carrier when one is available, unless a specific Federal Travel Regulation exception applies. See Federal Travel Regulation 301-10.107. Examples of exceptions include:

- Space on a scheduled contract flight is not available in time to accomplish the purpose of the travel or use of contract service would require employees to incur unnecessary overnight lodging costs, which would increase the total cost of the trip.

- The contractor's flight schedule is inconsistent with the EPA's policy on scheduling travel during normal working hours.

- A noncontract carrier offers a lower fare to the general public that, if used, will result in a lower total trip cost to the federal government (the combined costs of transportation, lodging, meals and related expenses considered).

VI. LOCAL TRAVEL AT OFFICAL STATION

LOCAL TRAVEL

Local travel, as defined by the EPA, is travel within 50 miles of the official station. Local travel does not require a travel authorization. Per diem is not allowed for employees working at their official stations or within the local travel areas surrounding the official stations. If local travel is advantageous to the federal government, officials delegated to authorize travel may approve reimbursement for transportation expenses that employees incur while conducting official business in their local area.

Employees must bear the cost of transportation for their normal commute from the residence to the office or the office to the residence unless:

- They are provided transit subsidy under Public Law 101-509, section 629.
- They are authorized home-to-work transportation under 31 U.S.C. 1344.
- They require transportation on the day they depart for official travel and their trip will last two or more days, requiring at least one night's lodging.
- They require transportation on their day of return from official travel lasting two or more days.
- They are not able to perform their commute by their normal mode of transportation.
- Their use of the alternate mode of transportation results in an increase in their commuting costs.

The EPA will not reimburse employees for parking incurred for direct travel between their residence and office.

Travel authorizing officials may approve reimbursement for travel between residence and home office by taxi when employees are officially ordered to work outside regular working hours in emergency situations and travel is during hours of infrequently scheduled public transportation or darkness. Travel authorizing officials must determine whether to reimburse on a case-by-case basis and consider the location of the residence, time and other contributing factors. An explanation for the reimbursement should be on the travel voucher.

Additionally, the following guidelines apply when performing travel in the defined local travel area.

- *Employees at the EPA Headquarters*. When the official station is Washington, D.C., the perimeter for local travel includes the District of Columbia, the Maryland counties of Montgomery, Howard, Anne Arundel, Prince Georges, Charles, St. Mary's, Calvert and portions of Queene Anne, Baltimore and Frederick, and in Virginia, the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, Stafford, King George and portions of Fauquier. Local travel includes employees' normal daily commute from their residence to their official station.

- *Employees in Regional Offices.* Regional Administrators or Deputy Regional Administrators establish the local travel area for their employees. Each region must submit its 50-mile local travel area list (e.g., cities, towns or counties) to the Cincinnati Finance Center.

- The EPA Order 1900.3, *Food at an EPA Conference, Workshop, Ceremony, Reception or Observation (1/12/10)* describes the circumstances when the EPA may use appropriated funds to pay for meals and light refreshments for employees working at their official station. In other situations, Agency managers should consult with the Office of General Counsel before authorizing the use of the EPA funds to pay for meals and light refreshments for federal employees who are not in travel status.

WAIVERS FOR LOCAL TRAVEL

The EPA Delegations 1-17-A and 1-17-C list the officials authorized to grant advance waivers from the prohibition on paying for lodging and per diem for employees working at their official stations. Send all retroactive or after-the- fact requests, including justification, for local travel waivers to the Director, Office of Financial Management. See the information under *Retroactive Approvals* in this section.

Employees must submit a request for a waiver through their management channels to the appropriate official no less than five business days prior to the event or assignment necessitating their incurring lodging or per diem expenses, unless there is an emergency which requires immediate approval of the waiver. See the EPA Appendix F, *Sample Request for Waiver to Local Travel Policy.*

Each office, Staff Director or equivalent level, should maintain a log of travel vouchers paid pursuant to a waiver.[14] The log will provide supporting documentation in the event of an audit or investigation. At a minimum, the log should include employees' names, their residence (city, state, county), travel date, travel location and the criteria for the waiver. A sample log is available in the EPA Appendix G, *Sample Log for Local Travel Waivers Granted.* Employees must scan or fax all approved waivers into the E-Gov Travel Service system as an attachment to the travel authorization. Exceptions for granting waivers for a per diem allowance include:

On-Scene Coordinators, Investigators, Inspectors, Auditors and Legal Personnel

Assistant Administrators and Regional Administrators grant an exception to the prohibition on paying lodging and per diem at the official station for their on-scene coordinators and other employees engaged in field work at removal or remedial sites or for their employees performing other official duties outside of the EPA facilities such as investigators, inspectors, auditors and legal personnel. The exception is granted when it is necessary for these employees to effectively perform official duties at sites away from their normal places of work provided that:

- Employees must remain at the site for one or more nights.
- Employees must commute early mornings or late nights to site to perform the task, e.g., field work, participate in joint emergency preparedness exercises, participate in inspections or investigations, participate in court proceedings, deposition or discovery such that they are on official duty three hours beyond their normal duty hours and the travel time to their residence exceeds one hour.

Meetings and Conferences other than Training

In limited circumstances, exceptions are made to the prohibition for reimbursing employees for lodging and per diem within the local travel area including meetings or conferences, where employees must perform official duties at times that extend substantially beyond normal duty hours.

Substantially extended hours are three hours more than the employees' normal tour of duty and travel time to their residence will exceed one hour. Substantially extended hours cause difficulty such that

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[14] Key Internal Control

employees cannot reasonably return to their residence following the completion of official duties. Additionally, substantially extended hours do not allow employees to obtain adequate sustenance and rest to effectively perform official duties at the meeting or conference the next business day. Travel authorizing officials may not consider the time employees spend at an evening reception or social event associated with the meeting or conference in making this determination.

The EPA Order 1900.3, *Food at an EPA Conference, Workshop, Ceremony, Reception or Observation (1/12/10)* provides guidance on the circumstances for determining whether the EPA pays for meals and light refreshments for agency employees during the meeting or conference. These determinations do not require a waiver of the prohibition on paying per diem for employees at their official station.

Training

Travel authorizing officials may approve lodging and per diem allowance for travel in the local area, in unique situations, if employees participate in off-site training under the Government Employees Training Act. Approval must meet three conditions:

- An EPA training officer determines that the event meets the definition of training in the Government Employees Training Act.

- The training activities, described in the agenda the agency's training officer approved, extend substantially beyond normal duty hours such that employees cannot reasonably return to their residence following completion of the training and obtain adequate sustenance and rest to effectively participate in the training the next day (three hours more than their normal tour of duty and travel time to their residence will exceed one hour). Travel authorizing officials may not consider the time employees spend at an evening reception or social event associated with the training in making this determination.

- Employees must reduce per diem claims for meals that the federal government pays or that employees normally pay, e.g., lunch, at the official station if the employees receive a meal as part of the training

The EPA Order 1900.3, *Food at an EPA Conference, Workshop, Ceremony, Reception or Observation (1/12/10)* provides guidance on the circumstances for determining whether the EPA pays for meals and light refreshments for agency employees during the training workshop. These determinations do not require a waiver of the prohibition on paying per diem for employees at their official station.

Unique Situations

Assistant Administrators, Regional Administrators or equivalent senior managers may grant advance approval of waivers of the prohibition on paying for lodging and per diem at the employees' official station, in situations other than those involving meetings and conferences, on-scene coordinators or other employees engaged in field work at removal or remedial sites, investigators, inspectors, auditors, legal personnel or training. Examples include emergencies or emergency preparedness exercises, which require employees to remain in the immediate vicinity of an EPA facility to return to duty on short notice. Waivers must be in writing and contain a complete explanation of why paying for employees

lodging and per diem is essential to ensure that the EPA operations are carried out effectively. Waivers may not be granted primarily for the convenience of employees.

Retroactive Approvals

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer must approve retroactive or after-the-fact waivers of the prohibition on paying for lodging and per diem at the employees' official station. Assistant Administrators, Regional Administrators or equivalent senior managers may request retroactive waivers by sending a memorandum in email to the Director, Office of Financial Management and Staff Director, Financial Policy and Planning Staff, located in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer within five business days of the event which prompted the waiver request. The memorandum must explain why paying for employees' lodging and per diem was essential to ensure that the EPA operations are carried out effectively and why advance approval was not feasible. All correspondence, including emails, must be retained as documentation in the responsible office. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer will respond to the retroactive waiver request within 10 working days. The Inspector General or designee approves for his or her employees. International travel is any official business trip to, from or within areas outside the 50 states; the District of Columbia; the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands or the territories of the United States. Please note that only travel that takes place entirely outside of the United States will qualify for consideration of gift acceptance under the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act, 5 U.S.C. Section 7342.

Any trip that originates in the United States with the next immediate stop in a foreign city or that originates in a foreign city with the next immediate stop in the United States does not qualify as taking place "entirely outside of the United States," as specified by the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act and will not be approved by the Office of General Counsel under this statute for acceptance of the travel expenses. However, the Office of General Counsel may be able to apply the Ethics in Government Act, 31 U.S.C. Section 1353, to accept travel for trips that originate in the United States with the next immediate stop in a foreign city or that originate in a foreign city with the next immediate stop in the United States. Please consult with the Office of General Counsel Ethics official if questions arise.

VII. INTERNATIONAL (FOREIGN AND INVITATIONAL – FOREIGN) TRAVEL

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

The Office of International and Tribal Affairs authorizes international travel on a trip-by-trip basis. International travel must satisfy one of the criteria listed:

- Directly supports an EPA program or project performed abroad.
- Fulfills an international obligation of the United States and the EPA under the terms of a formal agreement or informal commitment to participate in activity performed abroad.
- Benefits the EPA's domestic programs through acquisition of scientific, technical or regulatory information.
- Responds to a foreign government or to an international organization's request for technical advice or assistance on significant environmental problems. In these cases, the EPA will encourage the

foreign government or international organizations to pay for or share the costs of travel to the extent the law authorizes.

Federal Travel Regulation Chapter 304, *Payment of Travel Expenses from a Non-Federal Source,* describes proper situations for acceptance of payment from a nonfederal source and cites references. Examples of references:

- 5 U.S.C. 1353 authorizes a federal agency to accept funds from a foreign government, international or multinational organization for meetings, training or similar functions.

- 5 U.S.C. 7342 covers travel that occurs entirely outside the United States which a foreign government pays, where a federal agency permits acceptance and any regulations that the employees' agency prescribes.

Detail information on international travel is available at http://intranet.epa.gov/OIA.

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRIP PLAN

The international trip plan ensures that the EPA officials' international travel supports agency and United States foreign policy goals and priorities. Guidelines for processing the international trip plan:

- Employees who are first-time passport applicants or whose current *official* passports require an update or renewal must submit an international trip plan to the Office of International and Tribal Affairs at least 30 calendar days prior to the proposed departure date or earlier if possible. Official travel requires official passports.

- Employees who presently hold a valid official passport must submit an international trip plan to the Office of International and Tribal Affairs at least 21 calendar days or earlier prior to the proposed departure date. International trip plans not submitted within the appropriate deadline will require a justification in the Fast International Approval of Travel database with approval from the appropriate approving official, Assistant Administrator, Regional Administrator, General Counsel, Chief Financial Officer or designee.

- The international trip plan in the Fast International Approval of Travel database will require an amendment if there are changes to travel plans. Examples of amendments include adding another destination to the itinerary, changing the source of funding or changing meeting dates. Employees must report international trip plan cancellations to their program or regional office international travel coordinator as soon as the cancellation occurs and delete the trip from the Fast International Approval of Travel database.

- After review and approval, the Office of International and Tribal Affairs electronically assigns a trip number to the international trip plan and sends an email message to employees and the appropriate international travel coordinator with the trip number.[15]

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[15] Key Internal Control

In the event of a continuity of operations activation that results in a national emergency, all approved international trip plans with departure dates prior to or on the day of the continuity of operations activation, will require cancellation. Only emergency international travel is authorized at any time during the continuity of operations activation.

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRIP REPORT

Within 15 days of the final date of travel, a trip report must be completed in the Fast International Approval of Travel database. Each NPM and Region must monitor, at least annually, the completion of international travel reports by its travelers.

INTERNATIONAL (FOREIGN AND INVITATIONAL-FOREIGN) TRAVEL

- Employees should state on the travel authorization approval or pending approval for the proposed travel from the Office of International and Tribal Affairs and should show the assigned Office of International and Tribal Affairs trip identification number. The Cincinnati Finance Center will issue a travel advance, if requested, 10 days prior to a trip without an Office of International and Tribal Affairs international trip plan number on the travel authorization, with the caveat that employees must repay the advance if the trip is not approved.

- The EPA Headquarters and Regional Travel Management Centers will not issue airline tickets without the international trip plan number and the travel authorization number.

- Travel, pending funds in part or entirely from sources outside the EPA, such as foreign public or private sources, requires approval from the Office of General Counsel Ethics official in advance. Employees should use the funding tab in the Fast International Approval of Travel database to create their travel ethics form. In addition, any travel funded from an outside source also requires an approved EPA travel authorization and international trip plan consistent with the above procedures.

Foreign Citizens

Foreign citizens' travel to the United States is international travel if the EPA pays for the travel and initiates an invitational travel order in order to obtain services in support of the EPA mission. If the travel is jointly funded, payment from the United States and other countries, it is not international travel. Invitational travelers do not receive travel advances.

Foreign Travel by U.S. Officials

The National Security Council policy requires submission of foreign travel requests for officials at or above the rank of Assistant Secretary or equivalent, for the EPA, Assistant Administrator or above, of executive departments and agencies to the National Security Council at least seven business days prior to the scheduled date of travel. The National Security Council interprets the phrase at or above the rank of Assistant Secretary or equivalent as all Presidentially-appointed, Senate-confirmed officials. See the National Security Council memorandum, in the EPA Appendix K, *Foreign Travel by U.S. Officials*.

POTENTIAL DEPARTMENT OF STATE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES SYSTEM TEMPORARY DUTY BILL

The international cooperative administrative support services is the principal means the federal government provides and shares the cost of common administrative support at more than 200 diplomatic and consular posts overseas.

- Even if employees do not use the Department of State services while traveling, employees should check whether the country, for planned travel, has a policy and whether the services requested generate an international cooperative administrative support services temporary duty bill. The costs can differ depending on the number of employees during same time period for a certain number of days. Example of service is security cost for employees on a short term detail. The EPA may still receive a bill if employees are in country more than seven days, even if employees do not use services.

- If employees are in-country for an extended period of time, they, while in-country, should sign a temporary duty invoice representing the commitment of the funding for the agency to pay, which constitutes a valid obligation document for this process. Employees should inform their headquarters regarding all financial obligations the employees authorized and signed.

- The Office of International and Tribal Affairs contacts the appropriate budget office coordinator for employees upon receipt of the billing to obtain a commitment notice from the allowance holder under the appropriate National Program Manager.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL TEMPORARY DUTY

The Secretary of State establishes per diem allowances for travel in foreign areas including the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. These per diem allowances are available in Section 925, a supplement to the Department of State Standardized Regulations.

REIMBURSEMENT EXPENSES UNIQUE TO INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Travel authorizing officials approve unique expenses when:

- Employees pay to convert federal government checks into foreign currency and include the fee on their travel voucher. Employees should itemize expenditures in the money or currency of the country where purchased. If employees use annual leave in the middle of an official trip, the rate in effect on the day the employees return to official travel status will apply until another break or completion of the trip.

- Employees need international drivers' licenses to accomplish the EPA's mission rather than as a personal convenience.

- Employees qualify for hardship or danger pay under circumstances described in the Department of State Standardized Regulations. This benefit, added to their basic pay, is subject to federal income tax.

VIII. EPA APPENDICES

A- GENERAL INFORMATION

APPLICATION FOR A NEW TRAVEL CARD (First-time Cardholders at the EPA)

Employees should obtain the travel card application *Use of the Government Travel and Transportation Charge Card,* which includes employees' agreements that stipulate the contractual relationship between employees and the travel card contractor bank. Access the application at http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/finservices/cardholder_form.pdf.

Employees also receive a copy of the EPA memorandum of understanding for the travel card program. Find a copy of the EPA memorandum of understanding at http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/finservices/bankmou.pdf

Employees who leave federal government service and return undergo processing as new hires and require evaluation for credit worthiness. The EPA employees, transferring to another EPA office, do not need a credit worthiness assessment.

Employees who apply for the card must:

- Read the information in the EPA memorandum of understanding and the travel card application. For assistance with questions, employees should contact the Agency Program Coordinator for their office or the Cincinnati Finance Center.

- Complete and sign all documents. Employees' signatures on these documents indicate that employees understand and agree to the terms and conditions of the travel card program. Employees' supervisors must also sign the memorandum of understanding.

- Forward travel card application form, signed memorandum of understanding and a copy of the training certification form to the designated Agency Program Coordinator for processing. Employees should retain copies for their personal file.

The Agency Program Coordinator reviews employees' applications and the memorandum of understanding documents for completeness and appropriate supervisory signatures. The Agency Program Coordinator ensures employees receive a copy of the policies and procedures of the travel card program prior to forwarding applications to the travel card contractor bank for processing. The policies and procedures are attached to the application form.

Only *new* employees submit applications for credit worthiness assessments or credit checks to the Agency Program Coordinator. The travel card contractor bank processes the applications and provides Agency Program Coordinator with a *green, yellow* or *red* credit assessment, based on the contractor bank's internal criteria. The Agency Program Coordinators and employees do not receive the actual credit scores.

- [redacted] Approves the application and issues an unrestricted card. An unrestricted card is subject to the normal parameters assigned in the current contract with the travel card contractor bank and

does not have any additional limitations, for example, amount of available credit, the automated teller machine withdrawal ceilings, frequency or number of transactions. In general, employees who frequently travel receive a travel card with a $10,000 credit limit. Based on management's determination, the Agency Program Coordinator requests higher limits for employees with special needs and lower limits for employee who seldom travel.

- **Yellow.** The Agency Program Coordinator receives an email that the score is in the *yellow* range. Employees with *yellow* credit scores receive a *restricted travel card* with a $5,000 credit limit. At the request of the Agency Program Coordinator, other restrictions are added to the travel card, such as limits on individual transaction amounts or the automated teller machine use restrictions.

- [redacted] Employees and the Agency Program Coordinator are notified of a *red* condition and the travel card is not issued. Employees may reapply for a travel card after *one* year.

Employees should receive travel cards and personal identification numbers at their home address within two weeks after the Agency Program Coordinator submits the application to the travel card contractor bank.

If employees do not agree to the credit worthiness assessment, the travel card contractor bank issues a restricted travel card (see item, **Yellow**, above). The initial travel card is valid for two years from the date of issuance.

Travel Card Reissuance

Usage Evaluation Prior to Reissuance

At least twice annually, the Agency Program Coordinator and the Cincinnati Finance Center, if the region delegates that function to the Cincinnati Finance Center, review all travel card records for usage patterns, payment histories and indications of possible misuse or abuse.[16]

If the review indicates that the travel card is inactive for more than a year, the Agency Program Coordinator or the Cincinnati Finance Center, after consultation with employees' travel authorizing officials, should consider reducing the credit limit on the card to a nominal amount, e.g., *$3*, to keep the account open. This action in no way suggests that employees abused or misused the travel card. Should circumstances change, the Agency Program Coordinator requests that the travel card contractor bank reinstate the original credit limit without requiring any action from employees, such as employees do not need to reapply for a travel card.

If the Agency Program Coordinator or the Cincinnati Finance Center believes that the travel card requires cancellation due to prolonged inactivity, the Agency Program Coordinator or the Cincinnati Finance Center should discuss the matter with employees' supervisors and receive approval prior to the Agency Program Center or the Cincinnati Finance Center taking action. The employees' supervisors should consult with employees prior to approving the action. If employees subsequently need to obtain a

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[16] Key Internal Control

travel card, employees must reapply for a new card and undergo a credit worthiness assessment. See section V., Prudent Travel Management, Credit Worthiness in this policy document.

If a periodic review indicates that employees abused their cardholder privilege, charged inappropriate items to the account, the Agency Program Center or the Cincinnati Finance Center should advise the travel card contractor bank to apply immediate restrictions to the travel card, such as lower credit limit, reduce number of transactions or the automated teller machine withdrawals, based upon individual circumstances. Employees and their supervisors receive notification of the new restriction(s). The employees' supervisors should consult with the Office of Human Resources to determine whether it is appropriate to withdraw the travel card. A decision to withdraw the travel card requires the employees' supervisors to inform the Agency Program Center to take the necessary action.

Cardholder with Account in Good Standing (No Restrictions)

- The travel card contractor bank issues travel cards every three years. The process is automatic and employees do not need to take any action.

- The travel card contractor bank mails new travel cards to employees approximately 30 days before the old travel cards expire. If employees do not receive the new travel card, employees should initiate direct contact to the travel card contractor bank.

Cardholder with Restricted Account

The travel card contractor bank will not reissue a restricted card without authorization from the EPA.

- All employees with restricted cards must successfully complete the travel card training again before their travel card is reissued.

- The OMB requires annual re-evaluation of employees who were issued travel cards with restrictions, yellow credit scores or restrictions placed on travel cards due to abuse or misuse. The Agency Program Coordinator or Cincinnati Finance Center must perform the re-evaluation before the cards are reissued to the employees.[17]

- If employees manage restricted cards responsibly, the Agency Program Coordinator or the Cincinnati Finance Center requests that the travel card contractor bank reissue travel cards for another year. After at least one year of responsible use, the Agency Program Center or the Cincinnati Finance Center determines whether to lift the card restrictions.
- If the Agency Program Center or the Cincinnati Finance Center determines that employees with a restricted card abused or misused the card privileges during the review period, e.g., the travel card contractor bank received payments after the due date or finds that employees made inappropriate charges to the account, the travel card contractor bank will not reissue the card. The Agency Program Coordinator or the Cincinnati Finance Center will advise employees and their supervisor of this decision.

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[17] Key Internal Control

Employees with episodes of continued abuse or misuse must wait one year to reapply for a travel card. Under these circumstances, employees undergo processing as new cardholders and require a credit worthiness assessment, even if the employees received their first travel card without a credit worthiness assessment. When these employees perform official travel, the methods of payment include travel advances for lodging and per diem and the agency's centrally billed account for common carrier transportation expenses. Personal credit cards or cash may be used consistent with section V. Prudent Travel Management, Use of Cash for Payment of Common Carrier Transportation.

TRAVEL CARD USE

Employees must use the travel card only in connection with official travel. In some cases, a hotel may require payment as soon as a reservation is made. To pay the hotel, employees put the charge on the travel card and request a travel advance. Employees should make every attempt to do business with vendors that accept the travel card. In cases where vendors do not accept the travel card, employees use their personal cash or a personal credit card and claim reimbursement on their travel voucher.

Employees leaving, retiring or transferring to other federal government agencies should cut the travel card in half and return both halves to the Agency Program Coordinator for cancellation.[18] When employees transfer between the EPA official stations:

- Employees notify the Agency Program Coordinator at the new official station to ensure that the account is transferred. Failure to do so could result in interruption of travel card privileges.

- Employees notify the travel card contractor bank of a change of address.

- The Agency Program Coordinator at the former official station does not cancel or close the card. A closed account requires the former the Agency Program Coordinator to contact the travel card contractor bank to reopen the account. Closing the account will require a creditworthiness assessment to reopen accounts for employees and the travel card contractor bank may refuse to issue additional cards. As long as employees remain within the agency, the card *should remain active*.

- The Agency Program Coordinator at the new official station notifies the Cincinnati Finance Center of the change of official station.

Cash Advances

Employees obtain automated teller machine advances for an estimated 80 percent of cash transactions, such as taxi fares, registration fees or other similar expenses. The approved travel authorization is the only documentation needed for employees to obtain advances from an automated teller machine to cover allowable cash transactions. Employees may obtain approved automated teller machine advances no more than three business days before official travel begins.

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[18] Key Internal Control

Billing and Payment for Travel Card Purchases

The travel card contractor bank establishes accounts in the names of the EPA travel cardholders. Monthly, if there is a balance or activity on the account, the travel card contractor bank mails statements directly to travel cardholders' home addresses. The travel card contractor bank requires payment for all undisputed charges in full according to the statement billing due date printed on the statement.

If travel cardholders do not receive an expected monthly statement, travel cardholders should call the travel card contractor bank. The list of charges, on the billing statement, shows specific information merchants provided for the purchases or transactions. For clarification of charges or to dispute charges, employees should contact the merchant, e.g., hotel, airline, rental car company, that posted the charges. If travel cardholders are unable to resolve charges with the posting merchant, travel cardholders should contact the travel card contractor bank. Travel cardholders should follow the travel card contractor bank's procedures for disputing charges.

TRAVEL CARD ABUSE/MISUSE

Failure to Pay Travel Card Bills in a Timely Manner

Timely submission of travel vouchers, prompt approval and timely processing of travel vouchers prevent late payments to the travel card contractor bank. However, in rare cases, delinquencies occur and the following rules apply:

- 30 Days past Billing Date. Accounts are *past due* if the travel card contractor bank does not receive payment within 30 days of the billing date for the *Total Payment Due* shown on the billing statement. This applies even if employees filed travel vouchers and have not received reimbursement. Employees should review the terms specified in the travel card agreement for additional information. Any unpaid portion of the *Total Payment Due* appears on subsequent billing statements as a *Past Due Balance*.

- 45 Days past Billing Date. If accounts remain *unpaid* for all undisputed charges 45 days after the billing date for the *Total Payment Due*, the travel card contractor bank notifies employees and the employees' Agency Program Coordinator. *The Agency Program Coordinator notifies the employees' supervisors, subject to the local bargaining unit agreement, via email or memorandum that the travel card contractor bank has reported that their employees' accounts have outstanding balances and will suspend charging privileges if the balances remain unpaid at 60 days past the original billing date.*[19] The notification will provide a contact person and a telephone number for questions about the notice.
- 60 Days past Billing Date. If accounts remain *unpaid* for all undisputed charges 60 days after the billing date for the *Total Payment Due*, the travel card contractor bank automatically suspends employees' charging privileges. *The Agency Program Coordinator notifies employees, the employees' supervisors and Senior Resource Officials, subject to the local bargaining unit*

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[19] Key Internal Control

agreement, that the employees' charging privileges are suspended.[20] A sample notification memorandum is in the EPA Appendix H, *Sample 60-Day Overdue Memorandum*. During this suspension period, employees must contact their Agency Program Coordinator or the Cincinnati Finance Center for guidance if the employees need travel arrangements for official travel. If the employees pay the charges before the accounts are 120 days past the original billing date, the travel card contractor bank reinstates charging privileges.

- 181 Days past Billing Date. If undisputed charges on accounts remain *unpaid* 181 days past the original billing date, the travel card contractor bank will cancel the applicable travel cards. The travel card contractor bank also may assess late fees as long as the debts remain overdue, as well as court costs and reasonable attorney's fees, if the travel card contractor bank must refer all or part of the accounts to an outside attorney or outside agency for collection. These fees should not exceed 25 percent of the amount owed. Late fees or court fees are *not reimbursable* travel expenses. The travel card contractor bank also has the right to disclose relevant account information to credit bureaus. *Delinquency will affect employees' personal credit ratings only if the charges remain outstanding more than 180 days.*

For repeated suspensions, the travel card contractor bank has the right to cancel accounts suspended for undisputed amounts *two* times during a 12-month period. The appropriate designated officials take corrective action for misuse of the travel card or failure to pay undisputed debts timely.

Delinquencies and Collections

After undisputed debts are 90 days delinquent, the travel card contractor bank may send to the Cincinnati Finance Center demand letters for salary offset for employees. The request includes the debtors' names and travel card account numbers, the amounts of the debt and a point-of-contact at the travel card contractor bank to allow employees an opportunity to repay the debts.

The Cincinnati Finance Center will provide all travel cardholders who are more than 90 days delinquent with all necessary due process. After completion of due process, the Cincinnati Finance Center forwards demand letters along with a completed Department of Defense Form 2481 *Request for Recovery of Debt Due the United States* to the Defense Accounting and Finance Service that handles the EPA's payroll to begin salary offset. Access the Defense Accounting and Finance Service form used to process salary offset at http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2481.pdf. Send demand letters via fax to the Defense Accounting and Finance Service at (877) 622-5930. The telephone number is (888) 332-7411.

Repercussions

In rare cases, employees accidentally use travel cards instead of their personal cards for personal expenses. The Agency Program Coordinator or the Cincinnati Finance Center must review the circumstances of the misuse and decide whether these occurrences were deliberate or genuine mistakes. Factors to consider include the employees' actions to notify their supervisor, the Agency Program Coordinator or the Cincinnati Finance Center of the error, the types and amounts of expenditures and whether the employees have records of card abuse or misuse. The Agency Program Center or the

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[20] Key Internal Control

Cincinnati Finance Center has the discretion not to place restrictions on employees' travel cards due to one isolated error, but should ensure that the employees understand the seriousness of the mistakes and that future travel card misuse could result in restrictions.

Travel card abuse, misuse or delinquency occurs when employees:

- Charge other than official travel expenses on the card.
- Obtain the automated teller machine cash advances unrelated to official travel.
- Are delinquent in paying all undisputed billed charges.
- Charge expenses to their cards prior to receiving an approved travel authorization.

ARRANGING FOR TRAVEL SERVICES

Transportation Security Administration Secure Flight

The Transportation Security Administration requires identifying information from all individuals using commercial air carrier. To comply with the Transportation Security Administration *Secure Flight* and avoid interruptions or delays in air travel, the EPA employees must verify the information stored in their profiles in the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system against the information on their government-issued photo identification, e.g., state-issued driver's license that they use for travel. If employees identify a discrepancy between their EPA E-Gov Travel Service profile and photo identifications, employees must update their EPA E-Gov Travel Service profiles. For assistance, contact the Cincinnati Finance Center Help Desk at (513) 487-2346.

Issue with Using the E-Gov Travel Service System

Employees should first call or send an email to their program office or regional travel liaison for assistance. For password resets, employees should contact the Cincinnati Finance Center Help Desk for the EPA E-Gov Travel Service contractor. Find contact information for program or regional travel liaisons and the E-Gov Travel Service contractor at http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/finservices/govtrip/index.htm.

If the program office or regional liaison or the E-Gov Travel Service contractor does not resolve an issue, employees should contact the Cincinnati Finance Center Travel Help Desk at (513) 487-2346 or send an email at CINWD TRAVEL@EPA.GOV. Emergency travel arrangement support is available 24 hours daily at the emergency service number listed on the trip itinerary.

Privacy Concerns

If employees do not feel comfortable entering personal information for special needs during travel status into the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system, employees should initiate direct contact with the airline or hotel after completing reservations to discuss arrangements for any special needs. The representatives should make the necessary adjustments for employees.

Travel Authorization

The travel authorization should:

- Identify the appropriate travel code that describes the purpose of the travel. Purpose codes identify and collect data on transportation and relocation payments.

- Specifically identify the entity that will pay and include whether the payment is *in kind* or a combination of *in kind* and the EPA funds. Examples of *in kind* travel expenses are tickets, meals, lodging and transportation, including local rides.

- Include specific annual leave dates in the E-Gov Travel Service system under *Per Diem Entitlements* and in *Justification for Annual Exists*. Employees on annual leave, traveling at personal expense, should not officially represent the EPA or use official passports.

- Show approval from the appropriate designated federal official for invitational travel orders that the EPA issues to members of Federal Advisory Committees and other invitational travelers. Approval for travel expenses are the same as the EPA employees who travel on official business.

Employees must include the appropriate purpose code on the travel authorization. The EPA Appendix D *Travel Purpose Codes* provides the codes with descriptions.

No Cost Travel

5 U.S.C. 5702 and 5 U.S.C. 5724(a) provide entitlements for reimbursement of travel expenses. The only exception is travel related to a training assignment when the agency has agreed that employees pay for the travel as authorized in 5 U.S.C. 4109 or statutes that authorize nonfederal sources to pay for travel. Official travel performed at no expense to the federal government is included on a travel authorization to document that employees are on official business while absent from their official stations. On the travel authorization, include the statement "*No authorization for per diem or any other reimbursement allowed.*" After the completion of no-cost travel, cancel the travel authorization with the notation that the trip was at no cost to the EPA. A travel voucher is not necessary. The EPA is not legally required to reimburse employees for additional expenses unless travel authorizing officials determine to either pay for part of an extended training assignment or that employees are performing official duties following completion of travel paid for by a nonfederal source. If travel authorizing officials decide to pay additional expenses, they should amend the travel authorization.

Cost Comparison Vouchers

If employees request an alternate method of travel, travel authorizing officials should determine the method most advantageous to the federal government prior to approving the travel authorization. Limit reimbursement to the cost of travel via direct or uninterrupted route. Any additional costs, e.g., transportation tickets, hotel or meals, resulting from the use of a method of travel other than the one specifically authorized, approved or regulated are the responsibility of employees. A sample worksheet, EPA Appendix E *Sample Form Travel Cost Comparison Worksheet,* provides assistance for determining the most advantageous method of travel.

Travel Accounting

To avoid processing delays and to ensure accurate and timely financial reporting, carefully code travel documents with the correct accounting information, e.g., funding authority. Additional information is available in the EPA E-Gov Travel Service Training Manual, Chapter 2, *Authorization*, Section 2.8, *Selecting Accounting Codes*.

For travel expenses cross-funded between the EPA organizations, e.g., another EPA organization pays for the travel; employees' funds control officers obtain approval from the funding office prior to certifying funds availability and make corrections or adjustments to the funding.

Receipt Submission and Retention Requirements

The EPA Appendix I, *Imaging Documents into EPA E-Gov Travel Service System* provides the process for submitting travel documents into the system. Employees must ensure that scanned images are legible.

Retain and scan or fax into the E-Gov Travel Service system the following documentation:

- Evidence of necessary travel authorizations including any necessary special authorizations for other than coach-class, first-class or business-class, accommodations and the cash purchase of tickets over $100 not maintained in the E-Gov Travel Service system.

- Receipts for lodging or hotel, common carrier, rental car expense and registration fees, *regardless of the amount* or any other expense costing over $75.

- Employees must explain and justify, in the comments field of the travel voucher, the reason for lack of required receipts. Mere inconvenience in the matter of taking receipts is not an acceptable reason for not supplying the receipts.

After the *nonsite-specific* travel documents and receipts are scanned into the E-Gov Travel Service system, the original documents are filed in the employees' personal files.

When a Superfund, Oil Spill or Leaking Underground Storage Tank site-specific travel voucher is electronically submitted for reimbursement, employees concurrently must forward to the Cincinnati Finance Center all *original* receipts for lodging or hotel, common carrier, rental car and registration fees, *regardless of amount* and *original* receipts for all other individual expenditures of $75 or more. Employees must retain copies of original receipts and other documents mailed to the Cincinnati Finance Center. If employees cannot scan or fax travel receipts and documents, they should contact the Cincinnati Finance Center Help Desk for assistance before mailing any documents. The telephone number is (513) 487-2346. See the EPA Appendix J *Superfund Site-Specific Travel Receipts Submission Form.*

The Cincinnati Finance Center collects receipts for Superfund Site-Specific travel documents and scans the documents into the EPA's Superfund Cost Recovery Package Imaging and Online System. The Cincinnati Finance Center files the scanned documents in the appropriate site files and retains them consistent with existing Superfund records retention requirements, as provided in the EPA Records

Management Schedule, Series 024, *Cost Recovery Documents*. Read the schedule on the EPA Intranet at http://www.epa.gov/records/policy/schedule/sched/024.htm.

Travel Vouchers

Employees must prepare travel vouchers within five business days after completion of a trip and route electronically using the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system. For a description of the voucher process, see Chapter 3 *Voucher* of the E-Gov Travel Service System Training Manual available under the tab for help and documentation at http://www.govtrip.com/govtrip/site/index.jsp. The voucher process, slightly different for special situations, includes *invitational travel for nonfederal individuals or employees of other federal agencies:*

- Before creating a travel authorization for invitational travelers in the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system, travel preparers in the paying offices furnish invitational travelers with a copy of the EPA Form 2635-04 Traveler Identification. Invitational travelers complete, sign and return the form to travel preparers.

- Invitational travelers from other federal agencies may use their own agency's travel procedures if the EPA funds the travel under an interagency agreement. When the EPA invites employees from another agency to travel and does not use an interagency agreement, the EPA funds and creates the travel authorization and travel voucher in the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system. These invitees may use their federal government travel card to travel for the EPA. Process travel vouchers in the same manner as nonfederal invitational travelers.

- For nonfederal invitational travelers, program offices or regions designate individuals to sign travel vouchers on behalf of invitational travelers upon receipt of the signed travel vouchers from invitational travelers. After invitational travelers sign the hard copy of travel vouchers, the designees upload the travel vouchers into the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system and the designees stamp the travel vouchers with the status code of *T-entered.*

- Invitational travelers, both federal and nonfederal, complete paper vouchers and submit original required receipts to the sponsoring program offices or regions' points of contact. Upon receipt of signed invitational travel vouchers, the EPA travel preparers open the travel vouchers in the E-Gov Travel Service system and scan the first page of the original travel voucher with the invitational travelers' signatures into the E-Gov Travel Service system. Designated program offices or regions' points of contact stamp the voucher *"Voucher Prepared"* and notify their internal designees to stamp the travel voucher *"T-entered"* to start the routing process.

- Invitational travelers provide electronic funds transfer bank routing transit and account numbers to travel preparers, which is necessary to receive travel reimbursement. If invitational travelers do not provide such information, payment defaults to an agency-approved alternative method payment. The Cincinnati Finance Center enters the banking information into the EPA's financial management system to facilitate reimbursement to invitational travelers.

TRAVEL FOR NON-FEDERAL INDIVIDUALS

Except as specifically provided by law, federal agencies will not authorize or pay travel expenses of nonfederal individuals due to the prohibition in 31 U.S.C. 1345 on using appropriated funds to pay for

travel, transportation and subsistence expenses of nonfederal individuals at meetings. However, two statutes authorize exceptions to this general rule. The exceptions:

- *Pre-Employment Interviews.* Travel expenses authorized under the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990, Section 206. *The payment of travel expenses is not an entitlement and is solely at the agency's discretion on a trip-by-trip basis.*

- *Invitational Travelers.* The EPA may pay travel expenses for nonfederal individuals including members of Federal Advisory Committees under 5 U.S.C. 5703 for experts, consultants and individuals who serve without pay and are asked to consult with the EPA officials or otherwise provide a service to the agency such as give a presentation to agency employees. Find additional information at 5 U.S.C. 5703.

When the EPA issues invitational travel orders consistent with 5 U.S.C. 5703, nonfederal individuals are subject to the same provisions of the Federal Travel Regulation as federal employees. Recipients of invitational travel orders receive entitlements to reimbursement to the same extent as federal employees. However, the agency may not pay invitational travelers an honoraria or other compensation under 5 U.S.C. 5703.

Travel advances from appropriated funds are not allowed for nonfederal individuals. Common carrier transportation expenses require payment with the federal government Transportation Request or the centrally billed transportation services account. Invitational travelers must not use personal credit cards or personal checks to pay for transportation tickets that exceed $100.

Nonfederal individuals use the same documentation to support payment of transportation expenses as federal employees. The main difference is responsible EPA program offices or regions must issue letters to invitational travelers that document the reason for the invitation and the travelers should provide the EPA with a letter of acceptance. The travel authorization should show the category, e.g., committee member, speaker, witness, of the traveler. Invitational travelers should carry a copy of their invitation letter and photo identification documents on their official trip.

Pre-Employment Interviews

Section 206 of Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act authorizes payment of pre-employee interviews for all potential new appointees when administratively determined that such expenditures are essential in determining qualifications of individuals. This authority applies to both prospective candidates for federal employment and to current federal employees considered for employment at the EPA. *Payment of travel expenses is not an entitlement and is solely at the EPA's discretion on a trip-by-trip basis.*

Travel authorizing officials may elect to pay none, some or all travel expenses for prospective candidates. However, if the EPA elects to pay common carrier or privately-owned vehicle transportation expenses, the EPA must pay the total cost. If the EPA elects to pay a per diem allowance, the EPA must pay the full allowable per diem. With minor exceptions as stated under Federal Travel Regulation 301-75.201 – 301.75.205, the EPA may reimburse the same travel expenses that are reimbursable to federal employees on official business travel.

Do not use Section 206 of Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act as a means to persuade candidates to accept offers of employment nor for the purpose to help defray relocation expenses that are not allowable for new appointees. For example, do not use Section 206 of Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act to pay pre-employment travel expenses to allow interviewees or new appointees to look for a residence at their prospective official station. In addition, ensure arrangement of candidate interviews with appropriate agency officials at locations that minimize travel costs.

Invitational Travelers

Invitational travelers under 5 U.S.C. 5703 are nonfederal individuals who are asked to meet with federal officials to confer on a matter of official business because their knowledge, capability or experience provides a direct service to the EPA. The direct service provision must be met in order to pay travel expenses for invitational travelers.

Do not use invitational travel orders for individuals merely attending a meeting or conference who are not providing a direct service to the EPA as the Comptroller General has advised that such a practice is illegal. Generally, the EPA may not issue invitational travel orders to volunteers including student volunteers working at the EPA under 5 U.S.C. 3111. There may be limited exceptions to the general rule for student volunteers. Program offices and regions should consult with the Office of General Counsel or the Office of Regional Counsel if they believe issuing invitational travel orders to student volunteers would meet the direct service test. Examples of acceptable invitational travelers:

- Witnesses serving without pay who testify for the federal government based on their knowledge, experience or expertise are eligible for travel and per diem expenses. Nonfederal individuals called as witnesses in adverse action administrative proceedings, whether on behalf of the federal government or on behalf of employees (against whom the adverse action occurs), should receive payment for transportation and per diem allowance as individuals serving without compensation within the scope of 5 U.S.C. 5703. Only pay such travel allowances if the hearing officer determines that the testimony of witnesses are substantial, material and necessary for a proper disposition of the case and that affidavits from witnesses would not adequately accomplish the same objectives.

- College faculty members and staff visits to the EPA facilities as an aid to recruitment of agency employees.

- Consultants or experts hired under 5 U.S.C. 3109 are entitled to travel allowances as:

    - Intermittent consultants or experts, who work on an occasional or as needed basis (when actually employed) and limited to 130 days of work in an appointment year, receive entitlement to per diem and travel expenses from home to official station, at official station and from official station to home. Do not recognize intermittent status when consultants or experts are on a full-time or nearly full-time basis employment. Only pay allowances if the consultants' homes are not in the same corporate limits of the city or town as the official station.

- Full-time consultants or experts, who completed 130 days in an appointment or employed on a full-time basis, receive entitlement to travel allowances only when traveling away from their official station on official business.

- Mixed status, consultants or experts, who serve 130 days as intermittents and later converted to full-time in the same position and complete that appointment and subsequently reappointed to an intermittent, receive entitlement to per diem and travel expenses as stated in paragraph 3(a).

- Temporary duty station travel expenses for consultants or experts are reimbursable on the same basis as other federal employees.

- Attendants of disabled employees receive authorization for travel and transportation expenses as necessary costs to conduct official business. The travel authorization will provide for per diem and transportation of attendants from the place of residence or business to the temporary duty station and return.

- The EPA may issue invitational travel orders to Federal Advisory Committee members and other nonfederal individuals who advise the EPA at meetings conducted under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The travel authorization must indicate that travel directly relates to advisory committee participation and requires approval from designated federal officials for the invitational travelers.

- The EPA may issue invitational travel orders to nonfederal speakers at conferences, workshop presenters or other individuals providing information to audiences that include substantial numbers of federal employees. In most cases, the EPA is the sponsor or a co-sponsor of the event. Program offices must consult with the Office of General Counsel before issuing invitational travel orders to nonfederal speakers or presenters in other situations.

Guest Attendance at Awards Ceremonies

Under 5 U.S.C. 4503, the EPA may pay for one guest to attend a federal award ceremony, e.g., a Presidential award ceremony, an annual award ceremony of the EPA or major organizational component or a prestigious honorary award ceremony, sponsored by a non-federal organization provided that:

- The travel authorizing official approves the travel and transportation expenses.

- The travel is normally limited to one individual of the award winner's choosing. That person is any individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with employees is the equivalent of a family relationship. At agency discretion, travel reimbursement for more than one individual occurs when the award winner requires assistance due to a disability or to honor employees who gave their lives in the line of duty.

- Per diem is allowed for direct travel to and from the location of the award ceremony and for the day of the ceremony.

- In addition to these statutes, the EPA may pay for travel of nonfederal award recipients when the

agency has specific statutory authority to provide awards to nonfederal individuals. An example is the President's Environmental Youth Awards authorized in section 8(d) of the Environmental Education Act.

- Under the Government Employees Incentives Award Act, 5 U.S.C. 4503, the EPA may also pay for travel of spouses or other individuals to accompany the EPA employees to a federal award ceremony honoring the employees. The EPA may also pay travel expenses for a spouse and child to attend an EPA award ceremony for employees who died in the line of duty.

- The EPA may pay for the travel of its employees who will receive an award from a nonfederal organization only if the award is directly related to the employees' performance of official duties. The EPA may not pay for the travel of a spouse or other guest to attend the nonfederal award ceremony.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PERSONNEL ACT

The EPA has discretionary authority to pay travel expenses authorized under the Federal Travel Regulation for federal employees or nonfederal individuals on Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignments. Office of Administration and Resources Management is responsible for assisting individuals in planning all Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignments. Employees should contact the appropriate local Human Resource office for policy and program goals. Access an online course regarding Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignments on the Office of General Counsel Ethics Program Intranet site at http://intranet.epa.gov/ogc/ethics.htm.

Program offices or regions may select between payment of a per diem allowance at the assignment location or the limited relocation expenses, but must not pay both. However, program offices or regions may pay per diem for travel away from the assignment location, even if the program offices or regions pay the limited relocation allowances, as long as employees do not travel to their official station.

Program offices or regions must consider the cost to the federal government as a major factor when determining whether to pay a per diem allowance at the assignment location or limited relocation allowances. Program offices or regions must also consider the duration of the assignment. A per diem allowance is meant for shorter assignments. The payment of per diem for an indeterminate period or a period of more than one year is taxable to employees. Program offices or regions must not pay a per diem allowance for an assignment expected to last more than one year or for an indefinite period.

If program offices or regions pay a per diem allowance at the assignment location, the per diem allowance is only paid for employees on the mobility assignment. If program offices or regions pay relocation, they may pay transportation expenses for the immediate family of employees. Program offices or regions, however, will not pay the expenses related to selling or purchasing a residence or the expenses of property management services while employees are on the assignment. A program office must not authorize a temporary change of station under Federal Travel Regulation Part 302-1, Subparts C and D to transfer employees to the assignment location.

Employees must sign a service agreement for one year or the length of the assignment, whichever is shorter, for eligibility of payment of per diem at the assignment location or limited relocation expenses. If employees fail to complete the service agreement, they are responsible for repaying any related

expenses, unless the reasons for failing to complete the agreement are beyond their control. The EPA officials may waive the requirement for employees to pay back expenses if program offices or regions feel the waiver is justified. The service agreement does not cover travel expenses paid when employees travel away from the assignment location.

B- ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations	Description
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
GSA	General Services Administration
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
US	United States
USC	Unite States Code

C- GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Actual Expense. Payment of authorized actual expenses incurred, up to the limit prescribed by the Administrator of GSA or agency, as appropriate. Entitlement to reimbursement is contingent upon entitlement to per diem and is subject to the same definitions and rules governing per diem.

Agency Program Coordinator. Designated office or employee to administer the EPA travel card program, including the processing of applications for the card and answering questions from employees.

Coach-Class Accommodation. The basic class of accommodation by airlines that is normally the lowest fare offered regardless of airline terminology used. For reference purposes only, coach-class may also be referred to by airlines as "tourist class," "economy class," or as "single class" when the airline offers only one class of accommodations to all travelers.

Common Carrier. Private-sector supplier of air, rail or bus transportation.

Conference. A meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium or event that involves employees (attendees) travel. The term "conference" also applies to training activities that are considered to be conferences under 5 CFR 410.404.

Continental United States. The 48 contiguous States and the District of Columbia.

Contract Carriers. U.S. certified air carriers that are under contract with the federal government to furnish federal employees and other persons authorized to travel at federal government expense with passenger transportation service. This service also includes the GSA scheduled airline passenger service between selected U.S. cities or airports and between selected United States and international cities or airports at reduced fares.

Domestic Partner. An adult in a domestic partnership with an employee of the same-sex.

Domestic Partnership. A committed relationship between two adults of the same sex, in which they:
(1) Are each other's sole domestic partner and intend to remain so indefinitely;
(2) Maintain a common residence, and intend to continue to do so (or would maintain a common residence but for an assignment abroad or other employment-related, financial, or similar obstacle);
(3) Are at least 18 years of age and mentally competent to consent to contract;
(4) Share responsibility for a significant measure of each other's financial obligations;
(5) Are not married or joined in a civil union to anyone else;
(6) Are not a domestic partner of anyone else;
(7) Are not related in a way that, if they were of opposite sex, would prohibit legal marriage in the U.S. jurisdiction, in which the domestic partnership was formed;
(8) Are willing to certify, if required by the agency, that they understand that willful falsification of any documentation required to establish that an individual is in a domestic partnership may lead to disciplinary action and the recovery of the cost of benefits received related to such falsification, as well as constitute a criminal violation under 18 U.S.C. 1001, and that the method for securing such certification, if required, shall be determined by the agency; and
(9) Are willing promptly to disclose, if required by the agency, any dissolution or material change in the status of the domestic partnership.

Note to definition of "Domestic partnership": The definition of "Domestic partnership" requires that the partners "share responsibility for a significant measure of each other's financial obligations." This criterion requires only that there be financial interdependence between the partners and should not be interpreted to exclude partnerships in which one partner stays at home while the other is the primary breadwinner.

E-Gov Travel Service. The federal government-contracted, end-to-end travel management service that automates and consolidates the Federal travel process in a self-service Web-centric environment, covering all aspects of official travel, including travel planning, authorization, reservations, ticketing, expense reimbursement and travel management reporting. The E-Gov Travel Service provides the services of a federal travel management program as specified in Federal Travel Regulation 301-73.1(a), (b) and (e).

EPA's E-Gov Travel Service System. The E-Gov Travel Service system the EPA selected to comply with Federal Travel Regulation Chapter 301, Subchapter C, Part 301-50, *Arranging for Travel Services.*

Furnished Meal. A meal provided to employees, either directly from the federal government or as a result of the federal government paying a registration fee or other cost which allows the employee to attend a conference or other event. If the federal government has already paid for a meal, employees must deduct the allocated amount when filing their travel voucher.

Government Contractor-Issued Individually Billed Travel Cards. Federal government contractor-issued travel cards that authorized employees use to pay for official travel and transportation related expenses. The contractor bank bills the employees.

Government Furnished Automobile. An automobile or "light truck," as defined in 41 CFR 101-38 including vans and pickup trucks that is (a) owned by an agency; assigned or dispatched to an agency from the GSA Interagency Fleet Management System or leased the federal government for a period of 60 days or longer from a commercial source.

Government-Furnished Vehicle. A federal government furnished automobile or a federal government aircraft that may be used for travel.

Immediate Family. Any of the following named members of the employee's household at the time he or she reports for duty at the new permanent duty station or performs other authorized travel involving family members:
(1) Spouse
(2) Domestic partner.
(3) Children of the employee, of the employee's spouse, or of the employee's domestic partner, who are unmarried and under 21 years of age or who, regardless of age, are physically or mentally incapable of self-support. (The term "children" shall include natural offspring; stepchildren; adopted children; grandchildren, legal minor wards or other dependent children who are under legal guardianship of the employee, of the employee's spouse, or of the domestic partner; and an unborn child(ren) born and moved after the employee's effective date of transfer.).
(4) Dependent parents (including step and legally adoptive parents) of the employee, of the employee's spouse, or of the employee's domestic partner.

(5) Dependent brothers and sisters (including step and legally adoptive brothers and sisters) of the employee, of the employee's spouse, or of the employee's domestic partner, who are unmarried and under 21 years of age or who, regardless of age, are physically or mentally incapable of self-support.

Invitational Travel. Authorized travel of individuals either not employed or employed, under 5 U.S.C. 5703, intermittently in the federal government service as consultants or experts and paid on a daily when-actually-employed basis and for individuals serving without pay or at *one dollar* a year when they are acting in a capacity that is directly related to, or in connection with, official activities of the federal government. Travel allowances authorized for such persons are the same as those normally authorized for employees in connection with temporary duty.

Mileage Allowance. The GSA fixed rate per mile allowed instead of actual expenses for operating a privately owned vehicle.

Miscellaneous Expenses. Allowable travel and relocation expenses provided under Federal Travel Regulation 301-12 in addition to per diem and transportation.

Official Station. An area defined by an agency that includes the location where employees regularly perform their duties or invitational travelers' home or regular place of business. See Federal Travel Regulation 301-1.2. The area may be a mileage radius around a particular point, a geographic boundary or any other definite domain, provided no part of the area is more than 50 miles from where employees regularly perform their duties or from invitational travelers' homes or regular places of business. If the employees' work involves recurring travel or varies on a recurring basis, the location where the work activities of the employees' position of record are based is considered the regular place of work.

Official Travel. Travel under an official travel authorization from employees' official station or other authorized point of departure to a temporary duty location and return from a temporary duty location, between two temporary duty locations or relocation at the direction of a federal agency.

Other than Coach-Class Accommodations. Any class of accommodations above coach-class, e.g., first-class or business-class. Use of other than coach-class accommodations requires prior approval by the appropriate EPA officials or designees.

Per Diem Allowance. The per diem allowance, also referred to as subsistence allowance, is a daily payment instead of reimbursement for actual expenses for lodging, meals and related incidental expenses. The per diem allowance is separate from transportation expenses and other miscellaneous expenses. The per diem allowance covers all charges and services, including any service charges where applicable. Lodging taxes in the United States are excluded from the per diem allowance and are reimbursed as a miscellaneous expense. In foreign locations, lodging taxes are part of the per diem allowance and are not a miscellaneous expense. The per diem allowance covers the following:

- Lodging. Includes expenses, except lodging taxes in the United States, for overnight sleeping facilities, baths, personal use of the room during daytime, telephone access fee and service charges for fans, air conditioners, heaters and fires furnished in the room when such charges are not included in the room rate.

- Meals. Expenses for breakfast, lunch, dinner and related tips and taxes. Specifically excluded are alcoholic beverage and entertainment expenses and any expenses incurred for other persons.
- Incidentals expenses.
    - Fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, stewards or stewardesses and others on ships and hotel servants in foreign countries.
    - Transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, if suitable meals cannot be obtained at the temporary duty site.
    - Mailing cost associated with filing travel vouchers and payment of federal government sponsored charge card billings.

Privately Owned Vehicle. Any vehicle such as an automobile, motorcycle, truck, aircraft or boat operated by an individual that is not owned or leased by a federal government agency and is not commercially leased or rented by an employee under a federal government rental agreement for use in connection with official federal government business.

Receipt. A document provided by employees or businesses, which acknowledges that payment for services has been received. The receipt must contain enough detail to permit determination of allowable expense claims.

Reduced Per Diem. Travel authorizing officials may authorize a reduced per diem rate when there are known reductions in lodging and meal costs or when employees' subsistence costs can be determined in advance and are lower than the prescribed per diem rate.

Special Conveyance. Commercially rented or hired vehicles other than a privately owned vehicle and other than those owned or under contract to an agency.

Special Needs. Physical characteristics of employees not necessarily defined under disability. Such physical characteristics could include, but are not limited to, the weight or height of employees.

Subsistence Expenses. Expenses such as lodging and service charges; meals, including taxes and tips; and incidental expenses. See incidental expenses under the definition for diem allowance.

Temporary Duty Location. A place, away from employees' official station, where employees are authorized to travel.

Transit System. A form of transportation, e.g., air, rail, bus, ship, used between authorized locations in the performance of official travel.

Travel Advance. Prepayment of estimated travel expenses paid to employees.

Travel Authorization. The authorizing document, which when signed by travel authorizing officials or designees, directs employees to perform travel and authorizes them to incur necessary travel expenses.

Travel Management Center. A travel agency operated under the GSA contract which provides transportation services to the EPA and other federal employees. Services provided include, airline, bus,

ship, train, hotel or motel and car rental reservations. The EPA employees must use the Travel Management Center under the GSA contract to make all official transportation reservations.

Travel Voucher. A written request, supported by documentation and receipts where applicable, for reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of official travel.

Unique Situation. An unusual circumstance that requires waiver to the prohibition of paying for lodging and per diem at employees' official station in situations other than those involving meetings and conferences, on-scene coordinators, investigators, inspectors, auditors, legal personnel or training.
United States. The 48 contiguous States, the District of Columbia and the States and areas defined under the term "Non-Foreign Area."

Waiver. An exception, based on specific conditions, to a federal regulation or an EPA policy that may be granted by appropriate authorizing officials or designees.

D- TRAVEL PURPOSE CODES

Purpose codes are used to identify and collect data on transportation and relocation payments. Travel authorizations should include the EPA travel code that most nearly describes the purpose of the travel. Allowance Holders or their designees are responsible for ensuring that travel authorizations are correctly coded.

Code	Category	Description
0	Site Visit	Travel to a particular site other than a superfund or enforcement-related site to perform operational or managerial activities, for example, oversee program activities, grant operations or management activities for internal control purposes; perform audit, inspection or repair activity; conduct negotiations; provide instructions or provide technical assistance.
1	Site-Related Travel	Travel for site-related activities under the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended, and under Superfund. For definitions and policies applicable to each program, refer to the Resource Management Directive System 2550D on the Superfund program and the Resource Management Directive System 2550E on the Leaking Underground Storage Tank program.
2	Informational Meeting	Travel to attend a meeting to discuss general agency operations, review status reports or discuss topics of general interest. If a site visit is conducted as part of the same trip, consider the entire trip as a site visit. If the site visit is non-Superfund related, use purpose code "0." If the site visit is Superfund, use purpose code "1."
3	Travel for Training	Travel in conjunction with educational activities, planned program, course or curriculum, to increase proficiency or expand qualifications to perform areas of responsibility. Examples are job required training, internships, forums.
4	Speech or Presentation	Travel to give a speech or presentation, deliver a paper or otherwise take part in a formal program other than a training course.
5	Conference Travel	Travel to attend a prearranged meeting, retreat, convention, seminar or symposium for consultation or exchange of information or discussion. Examples are participation in a planned program as a speaker or panelist or other form of presentation, host, planner or others designated to oversee the conference or attendance with no formal role or as an exhibitor.
6	Entitlement Travel	Employees may be eligible for entitlements when the employees or their dependents serve at a duty station outside the conterminous United States, for example, tour renewal agreement travel to take leave between tours of duty or educational travel, which provides travel for both the employees and dependents as a result of an assignment.
7	Special Mission Travel	Travel to perform a special agency mission or task outside the agency's normal course of day-to-day business activities that is

Code	Category	Description
		unique or distinctive. For example, provide security to a person or a shipment, such as a diplomatic pouch; move witnesses from residence to other locations; travel by federal beneficiaries and other nonfederal individuals.
8	Emergency Travel	Travel related to an unexpected occurrence, event, injury or illness that personally affects employees or requires their immediate action or attention. Examples: (1) employees are incapacitated by illness, injury or death or serious illness of employees' family members (as defined in Federal Travel Regulation 300-3.1 or Federal Travel Regulation 301-30.2 and (2) employees are notified of a catastrophic occurrence or impending disaster that directly affects employees' homes. Emergency travel is necessary to return employees from temporary assignment locations at federal government expense to their designated duty station or home or other alternate locations, where the employees are normally located to take care of the emergency, if the federal government had not directed or assigned the employees to other locations to perform official business.
9	Other Travel	Travel for a *purpose* that is not included in this table. When "other travel" is selected, employees should explain the purpose of travel on the travel authorization.
D	Relocation Travel	Travel performed in connection with a transfer from one official station to another for employees and their immediate family members. Examples are permanent change of station moves for domestic and international transferees or new appointees; tour renewal; temporary change of station and last move home.
E	Enforcement Related Travel (non-Superfund)	Travel to a site or facility to support the activities of an organization's enforcement program. Examples are enforcement-related inspections, samplings, judicial proceedings, investigations and negotiations. Additionally, use this code for travel to a state or local government to discuss a specific enforcement action.
F	Federal Government under the Federal Advisory Committee Act Travel	Travel to attend a meeting which advisory committees furnish expert advice, ideas and diverse opinions to the federal government under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. Appendix 2. The Deputy Administrator selects and appoints the experts to serve as committee members for various issues based on their professional qualifications.
R	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Travel	Travel to perform Resource Conservation and Recovery Act activities.
S	State-Related Travel	Travel to meet with state, local and tribal governments to conduct business for the EPA. This includes general discussions of state, local or tribal environmental programs and grant negotiations, oversight and monitoring. For meetings to discuss

Code	Category	Description
		specific enforcement actions, use purpose code "E" for enforcement-related travel.
T	Taxable Extended Duty	Travel to indefinite temporary duty assignments that are expected to exceed 12 months.

E-SAMPLE TRAVEL COST COMPARISION WORKSHEET

Calculate the constructive cost – the normal cost for official travel consistent with the Federal Travel Regulation and the EPA's policy. Search for the contract fare in the EPA E-Gov Travel Service system or on the GSA's city pair airfare website at http://apps.fas.gsa.gov/citypairs/search /. Print a copy of the screen with the flight information and attach to the worksheet for documentation.

Employee's Name	Authorization	Travel Dates

TRANSPORTATION COSTS

Departure Date	Flight No.	Departure City	Departure Time	Arrival City	Arrival Time
Departure Date	Flight No.	Departure City	Departure Time	Arrival City	Arrival Time

1st Checked Bag Fee: $_____
Additional Checked Bag Fee: $_____
Estimated Bag Fee Total: $_____

Airfare: Round trip total $_____

Ground Transportation

Transportation to and from the *point of origin* (from official station or residence to location of common carrier)
Use of taxi: $_____
or
Use of privately owned vehicle:
Number of miles round trip _____ @ $ _____cents per mile $_____
Parking number of days _____ @ $ _____ per day $_____

Note: For compliance with the Federal Travel Regulation, the total cost for mileage and parking must not exceed the estimated cost of taxi fare to and from the airport.

Transportation to and from the *point of departure* (from location of common carrier to temporary duty station)
Use of taxi: $_____
or
Use of rental vehicle:
Number of days @ $ _____ per day $_____

Use of other public transportation (e.g., shuttles and buses) $_____

Ground Transportation Total $_____

OTHER TRAVEL

Other modes of travel (e.g., rail, commuter planes and buses) $_____

TOTAL TRANSPORTATON COSTS $_____

PER DIEM COSTS

Meals and Incidental Expenses: Number of days _____ @ $ _____ per day $_____
Lodging: Number of days _____ @ $ _____ per day $_____

TOTAL PER DIEM COSTS $_____

MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

General expenses (lodging taxes, approved checked baggage allowances), fees approved to obtain money and special expenses of foreign travel: $_____

TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES $_____

REIMBURSABLE AMOUNT

Total Constructive Cost of Transportation, Per Diem, Miscellaneous Expenses (above): $_____
Total cost reimbursement is limited to the official travel amount, shown above. If the actual expense amount on the voucher is less than the amount shown, pay the lesser amount.

F- SAMPLE REQUEST FOR WAIVER TO THE LOCAL TRAVEL POLICY

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Request for Waiver to the Local Travel Policy

FROM: Appropriate Management Official (responsible for supervising employees)

THRU: Others in Management Channel

TO: Appropriate Official with Delegated or Redelegated Authority to Approve

This memorandum requests your approval for a waiver to the EPA Local Travel Policy, contained in the EPA's Resource Management Directive System 2550B, Official Travel, for *name of individual or several employees* (see attached list of names) to (describe event or assignment).

The *name of facility* is *xx* miles from the *insert name of* office and chosen because of *insert appropriate reason*, for example, its proximity to the airport, location selected by another agency or nonfederal meeting sponsor, assignment away from normal work location. This request complies with the requirement for (insert the appropriate category from below and include in the memo a detailed explanation of why granting the waiver meets the requirements of the category, including the employees' role in the event or assignment and a statement that the employees will need to work more than three hours beyond their normal duty hours and would need to commute more than one hour to their residence following completion of their duties):

- On-Scene Coordinators, Investigators, Auditors and Legal Personnel.
- Meetings and Conferences Other Than Training.
- Training.
- Unique Situations.

See section VI. Local Travel at Official Station for additional information.

All requests will also contain the employees' names; city, state, county of employees' residences; name of event or assignment; name of and address of the facility where the event or assignment will take place; dates of event or assignment and projected number of days of employees' involvement at the event or assignment.

The memorandum must include a line at the end for the official with delegated approval authority to certify that travel expenses are necessary, will be incurred to further the best interest of the federal government and comply with the requirements of the applicable category.

G- SAMPLE LOG FOR LOCAL TRAVEL WAIVER TO LOCAL TRAVEL POLICY

Employee's Name	Employee's Residence (City, State, County)	Travel Dates	Travel Locations	Criteria for Waiver	Comments

H- SAMPLE 60-DAY OVERDUE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Overdue Federal Government Travel Card Account

FROM: Jane Doe
Financial Management Officer

TO: John Smith
EPA Employee

The EPA Government Travel and Transportation Travel Card contractor bank advised us that you have an overdue balance on your billing statement in the amount of $_____. This amount is now at least 60 days past due.

Consistent with the travel card contractor bank's procedures and the EPA policy, you must pay all undisputed amounts in full according to the due date on your travel card billing statement.

Because this debt is over 60 days past due, the travel card contractor suspended your charging privileges consistent with Agency policy. In addition, the travel card contractor bank may request that the EPA begin the salary offset process if this debt is 90 days overdue.

The travel card contractor will cancel your card if the travel card contractor bank does not receive payment before your account is 181 days delinquent and may assess a late fee on the outstanding balance until paid. You must pay according to the billing statement date due in the future. The travel card contractor may cancel your card if your account shows a suspension for undisputed amounts two times during a 12-month period.

Direct any questions concerning your billing statement to:

Name, address and telephone number for current travel card contractor

If you have any questions about this notice, please contact_____ at _____.

cc: Employee's supervisor

I- IMAGING DOCUMENTS INTO E-GOV TRAVEL SERVICE SYSTEM	
Facsimile Method	**Scan/Upload Method**
1. Gather all necessary documents and send via facsimile. For small receipts, tape them to standard-size paper, make a legible copy and send the copy.	1. Gather all necessary documents and scan them. Acceptable file types include: .bmp; .gif; .jpg; .pdf and .tif. The maximum file size is 2MB per file. Multiple files are acceptable. However, each file requires a separate upload. Repeat steps 4-6 below, as necessary. Verify that each scanned document is legible.
2. Click "Expenses" from the main navigation bar.	2. Click "Expenses" from the "Main" navigation bar.
3. Click "Receipts" from the "Expenses" navigation bar.	3. Click "Receipts" from the "Expenses" navigation bar.
4. Click the "Print Fax Cover Sheet" (link).	4. Click the "Browse" button and locate the scanned file to upload.
5. Click the "Print" button when the "Print Dialog" window appears to get a hard copy of the Fax Cover Sheet. The Fax Cover Sheet has a bar code unique to the selected document and identifies the document in the EPA E-Gov Travel Service database to which the receipts are assigned. Use the "Notes" section of the Fax Cover Sheet to indicate that receipts are attached to load in the facsimile process. **Print** a new Fax Cover Sheet for each facsimile submission into the EPA E-Gov Travel Service database.	5. Click the "Open" button once the desired file is selected.
6. Send receipts or supporting documents to the number on the Fax Cover Sheet.	6. Click the "Upload" button.
7. After loading the facsimile into the document, a display appears in the lower portion of the "Receipts" window, date sorted.	7. After loading the file into the document, a display appears in the lower portion of the "Receipts" window, date sorted.
8. Enter a description of the receipts contained in the facsimile in the "Notes" field and click the "Save Notes" button.	8. Enter a description of the receipts contained in the uploaded file in the "Notes" field and click the "Save Notes" button.
9. Click "View" to review receipts contained in the facsimile and to verify legibility.	9. Click "View" to review receipts contained in the upload.
10. If necessary, click "Remove" to remove the desired facsimile from the current document.	10. Click "Remove" to remove the desired upload from the current document.

J- SUPERFUND SITE-SPECIFIC TRAVEL RECEIPTS SUBMISSION FORM

If employees cannot scan or fax travel receipts and documents, they should contact the Cincinnati Finance Center Help Desk (513-487-2346) for assistance before mailing any documents.

Date of Submission:

Name of Employee:

Site Identification Number:

Start date of travel:

End date of travel:

Authorization Number:

Document Control Number:

Time charged to site in the EPA's Time and Attendance System: __ Yes or __ No (please explain)

Attached are original receipts for:
__ Airfare, train and transaction fees
__ Hotel
__ Supplies – $75 or more
__ Registration Fee
__ Rental car
__ Miscellaneous – $75 or more
__ Parking – $75 or more
__ Taxi fare – $75 or more

No receipts attached:
__ Local travel or under $75

Comments

Note: The credit card statement is only acceptable when there is no other way to obtain a copy of the receipt. If you did not attach any of the above receipts, please provide a justification in the section above for **Comments**.

SUBMIT TO: U.S. EPA Cincinnati Finance Center
26 W. Martin Luther King Drive
Mail Stop – 002
Cincinnati, OH 45268-7002

K- FOREIGN TRAVEL BY U.S. OFFICIALS

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Foreign Travel by U.S. Officials

FROM: Assistant Administrator
Office of International & Tribal Affairs

TO: Administrator
Deputy Administrator
Assistant Administrators
Inspector General

On March 5, 2010, the National Security Council issued a reminder concerning Administration policy on foreign travel by U.S. officials. This policy requires that foreign travel requests for officials at or above the rank of Assistant Secretary or equivalent of executive departments and agencies submit to National Security Council at least seven business days prior to the scheduled date of travel. The National Security Council interprets "at or above the rank of Assistant Secretary (or equivalent)" as including all Presidentially-appointed, Senate-confirmed officials.

Notifications to the National Security Council must include the following information:

- ☐ Name(s) of senior participants;
- ☐ Objective(s)/purpose of the trip;
- ☐ Itinerary; and
- ☐ List of major events, meetings and appearances.

To ensure that the EPA adheres to this mandatory notification policy, I ask that whoever prepares your travel complete and submit the attached form to my office at least two weeks in advance of any foreign travel that you have planned. The Office of International and Tribal Affairs is responsible for reviewing the form and forwarding it to the National Security Council.

Send completed forms to, the Office of International and Tribal Affairs Chief of Staff, either by email or fax.

If your travel coordinator has any questions regarding the notification policy, please have them contact.

Attachment

SAMPLE: PRINT ON LETTERHEAD

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Request for Foreign Travel

Senior Official and Title:

Purpose of Travel:

Date	City	Country	Major Event/Meeting

(Signature)

L- OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL APRIL 30, 2007 MEMORANDUM "LIGHT REFRESHMENTS FOR NON-FEDERAL INDIVIDUALS AT MEETINGS'

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

APR 30 2007

OFFICE OF
GENERAL COUNSEL

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Light Refreshments for Non-Federal Individuals at Meetings

FROM: Stephen G. Pressman
Associate General Counsel
Civil Rights and Finance Law Office

TO: Deputy Assistant Administrators
Deputy Regional Administrators
Deputy Inspector General
Deputy Chief Financial Officer
Assistant Regional Administrators

The Department of Justice, Office of Legal Counsel (OLC), issued an opinion on April 5, 2007, concluding that EPA may not use appropriated funds to pay for light refreshments for non-federal participants at EPA meetings, conferences, and training events. This memorandum summarizes the OLC opinion and identifies a few situations in which EPA may continue to provide light refreshments.

In an email to Agency managers in October 2005, OGC recommended that, until OLC issued an opinion on this issue, the Agency should take all reasonable steps to ensure that appropriated funds are not used to purchase light refreshments for non-federal individuals at formal conferences and for non-federal individuals at training events. The Agency issued EPA Order 1900.3, *Food at An EPA Conference, Workshop, Ceremony, Reception or Observance* (November 22, 2006), which reflected OGC's advice on this question.

OLC has now issued its opinion and it confirms that, under 31 U.S.C. §1345, EPA generally may not provide meals or light refreshments to non-federal participants at EPA meetings, conferences, and training events unless explicitly authorized by statute. OLC found that the general provisions in EPA's statutes authorizing the Agency to conduct training sessions or conferences, or to cooperate with others, do not explicitly authorize the use of appropriated funds for light refreshments and, therefore, are not exceptions to section 1345.

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OLC also advises that a violation of 31 U.S.C. §1345 is *not*, by that fact alone, a violation of the Antideficiency Act (ADA). The ADA only applies to violations of purpose limitations that are contained in an appropriation act.

Despite OLC's opinion, there are still some circumstances in which appropriated funds may be used to pay for light refreshments for non-federal participants at meetings:

1. Invitational Travel Orders. EPA may pay for the meals and light refreshments of non-federal speakers at EPA events under the invitational travel authority of 5 U.S.C. §5703. However, this authority extends only to non-federal personnel providing a direct service to the Government rather than merely attending an event.

2. Award Ceremonies Specifically Authorized by Law. Appropriated funds may be used for light refreshments at awards ceremonies authorized by the Government Employees' Incentive Awards Act, 5 U.S.C. §4501, or when awards are specifically authorized by statutes such as section 6604(b)(13) of the Pollution Prevention Act, 42 U.S.C. §13103(b)(13), and section 8 of the National Environmental Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §5507.

3. Official Reception and Representation Fund. EPA may purchase meals and light refreshments for non-federal attendees at events with funds specifically appropriated for official reception and representation purposes. These funds are available only to the Office of the Administrator.

4. Assistance Recipients Purchasing Light Refreshments. EPA's grant recipients may use grant funds to purchase meals or light refreshments for non-federal attendees at conferences. Federal grant funds in the hands of grantees are not subject to 31 U.S.C. §1345. EPA should only use grants for assistance purposes, and should not award a grant if the Agency's principal purpose is to acquire goods or services.

5. Co-sponsored events. EPA may co-sponsor events where a non-federal co-sponsor pays for meals and light refreshments with its own funds, private donations, or fees.

6. Fees from non-federal attendees. EPA or its contractor may collect fees to pay for meals and light refreshments (not mandatory registration fees). Amounts collected in excess of that needed for meals and light refreshments must be deposited into the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts.

OGC has posted answers to frequently asked questions about meals and light refreshments at http://intranet.epa.gov/ogc/memoranda/meals.htm. If you have questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Richard Feldman, Assistant General Counsel, or Jim Drummond, Attorney-Advisor, Claims, Property and Appropriations Law Practice Group, Civil Rights and Finance Law Office, at 202-564-5434 and 202-564-5456, respectively.

M- REFERENCES

Federal Travel Regulation Chapter 300, *General* provides a glossary of terms. This chapter is periodically revised with new terms or clarification of existing terms. The glossary is available at Federal Travel Regulation Chapter 300.

Federal Travel Regulation Chapter 301, *Temporary Duty Travel Allowances* includes general rules; allowable travel expenses; arranging for travel services; paying travel expenses and claiming reimbursement. The information is available at Federal Travel Regulation Chapter 301

Federal Travel Regulation Chapter 301, Part 301-13, *Travel of an Employee With Special Needs* provides allowable travel expenses for special needs. The information is available at Federal Travel Regulation Part 301-13.

Federal Travel Regulation Chapter 301, Part 301-30, *Emergency Travel* is available at Federal Travel Regulation Part 301-30.

Federal Travel Regulation Chapter 301, Part 301-53, *Using Promotional Materials and Frequent Traveler Programs* is available at Federal Travel Regulation Part 301-53.

The Defense Travel Management Office manages the U.S. Government Rental Car Agreement for participating rental vehicles vendors. This Agreement governs the rental of vehicles by military members, employees of the federal government and employees of the United States Postal Service while in official travel status when a rental vehicle is authorized by the government. For the EPA employees, travel authorizing officials determine when use of a rental vehicle is necessary for official travel. The U.S. Government Rental Car Agreement is available at http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/CarRentalAgreement.pdf. A list of participating rental car vendors is available at http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/CRAgreementPOCs.pdf.

The GSA Travel Card Online Training is available at https://smartpay.gsa.gov/program-coordinators/training.

The Office of Management and Budget Circular A-123, Revised 2009, *Improving the Management of Government Charge Card Program,* which provides guidelines for the travel card, is available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/circulars/a123/a123_appendix_b.pdf.

United States Code, Title 5, *Government Organization and Employees* (specifically Chapter 57, which provides allowances for travel, transportation and subsistence) is available at http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/05C57.txt.

Delegation Chapter 1-17-A, *Domestic Travel* is available at http://intranet.epa.gov/ohr/rmpolicy/ads/dm/index1.htm.

Delegation Chapter 1-17-B, International (Foreign or Invitational-Foreign) Travel is available at http://intranet.epa.gov/ohr/rmpolicy/ads/dm/index1.htm.

Delegation Chapter 1-17-C, Domestic and International Travel for the Office of Inspector General is available at http://intranet.epa.gov/ohr/rmpolicy/ads/dm/index1.htm.

The Resource Management Directive System documents establish the EPA accounting and financial management policies, procedures and technical interpretations. The Resource Management Directive System index, with links to the new travel and relocation policies, is available at http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/policies/resource.htm.

The Cincinnati Finance Center Travel Resource Page provides information on the EPA E-Gov Travel Services system; travel help and contact; "what to know" when preparing for travel (including emergency travel guidance) and references. The information is available at http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/policies/resource.htm.

The EPA *Emergency Travel Guidance*, issued in 2006, is still in effect and available at http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/finservices/emergency_travel_guide.pdf.

The EPA Order 1900.3, *Food at an EPA Conference, Workshop, Ceremony, Reception or Observance* is available at http://intranet.epa.gov/ohr/rmpolicy/ads/orders/1900_3.pdf.

Guidance and procedures on conferences are available at http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/conferences/index.htm

The EPA Order 3120.1, *Conduct and Discipline* provides ethical standards and polices that govern employee conduct and corrective actions. The information is available at http://intranet.epa.gov/ohr/rmpolicy/ads/orders/3120_1.pdf.

The Office of General Counsel provides links to travel information and ethics advisories at http://intranet.epa.gov/ogc/ethics.htm.

The Office of General Counsel's *Frequently Asked Questions on Meals and Light Refreshments* are available at http://intranet.epa.gov/ogc/memoranda/meals.pdf.

The Office of International and Tribal Affairs provides travel information for international trips at http://intranet.epa.gov/OIA.

The EPA records management policies are available at: http://www.epa.gov/records/policy/index.htm.

	U. S. Environmental Protection Agency **Office of the Chief Financial Officer** **Policy Procedure**	
	Relocation Allowances for Change of Official Station	
	Effective Date: **April 17, 2015** **Supersedes Resource Management Directive System 2550B, Travel Manual 1995**	**Resource Management Directive System** **2550B-1 Relocation Allowances**

I. INTRODUCTION Purpose

General Services Administration establishes federal government requirements for relocation. Chapter 302, Relocation Allowances of the Federal Travel Regulation, 41 Code of Federal Regulations 302 or 41 CFR 302, contains the federal government rules for relocation, e.g., first official station and change of official station, for federal civilian employees. The Federal Travel Regulation, as amended, is the *first* source of reference for all federal travel, permanent change of official station and temporary change of official station. All agency employees and authorizing officials shall have knowledge of and comply with the Federal Travel Regulation and the EPA travel policies and procedures. If any differences, except for discretionary allowances, exist between this policy and the Federal Travel Regulation, the Federal Travel Regulation governs.

Policy

Relocation only occurs when existing employees at a duty location cannot satisfactorily perform official agency business. This policy:

- Establishes the EPA guidelines for official domestic and international relocation allowances.
- Requires that written authorization must precede the occurrence of official relocation travel.
- Provides information for creating travel authorizations and processing payments to eligible employees and new appointees for reimbursement of expenses incurred while traveling to a change of official station.
- Interprets requirements and entitlements in a manner that balances the need to ensure that change of official station is conducted responsibly with minimal administrative costs.
- Provides procedures for the EPA Relocation Counselors, employees and new appointees.

Authority

Relocation statutes, regulations, policies and guidelines for the EPA employees:

- U.S.C. Title 5, *Government Organization and Employees*, Chapter 57, *Chapter 57 of Title 5 of U.S.C.*

- Federal Travel Regulation, Chapter 302, Relocation Allowances.

- Federal Travel Regulation, Chapter 301, Temporary Duty Travel Allowances, where applicable.

- Resource Management Directive System 2550B, Official Travel, where applicable. http://intranet.epa.gov/ocfo/policies/resource.htm

- The EPA Delegations 1-17-A and 1-17-B. http://intranet.epa.gov/ohr/rmpolicy/ads/dm/index1.htm

- The EPA Order 3110.20, Determination for Payment of Travel, Transportation and Relocation Expenses (11/14/02) or any successor policy.

- Administrative Control of Appropriated Funds (Funds Control Manual), Resource Management Directive System 2520, Version 3.2, February 4, 2008 or any successor policy.

- Department of State Standardized Regulations *(Government Civilians, Foreign Areas).*

- Department of State, Foreign Affairs Manual.

- Joint Federal Travel Regulations for Commissioned Officers.

II. MANDATORY REVIEW

The next review for this policy is three years. However, review and revision of this policy will occur when a new federal regulation or the EPA policy warrants.

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This section identifies the responsibilities of employees, supervisors and travel authorizing officials. Assigned responsibilities ensure appropriate consideration of the need for relocation, alternatives to relocation, the most effective routing and means of accomplishing relocation and to ensure compliance with the Federal Travel Regulation and the EPA policies and procedures.

INDIVIDUALS

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

TRANSFERRING EMPLOYEES

- Should know and comply with the Federal Travel Regulation and the EPA relocation policies to properly claim reimbursement for authorized relocation expenses.
- Should exercise the same care in incurring travel and relocation expenses for the federal government that employees would use if traveling on personal business. Official business is never secondary to personal pleasure trips.
- *May not* begin to incur expenses until travel authorizing officials approve the travel authorization and a document control number is assigned.
- Perform all official relocation travel within the guidelines and directions provided in the Federal Travel Regulation and this policy and seek any needed clarification from their supervisor or the EPA Federal Employee Relocation Center. The Federal Employee Relocation Center Relocation Team assigns Relocation Counselors to employees to manage and oversee the relocation process. However, employees are ultimately responsible for their own accurate travel and relocation process.
- Reimburse the EPA for the cost of transportation and other charges applicable in excess of 18,000 pounds for household goods. Employees pay the charges for excess weight valuation above the maximum amount and services obtained at higher costs in the same manner as they are responsible for excess transportation costs.

SUPERVISORS

- Provide employees with access to the EPA policy and any other regulations about travel.
- Must provide employees with an opportunity to review travel and relocation information before employees begin travel.
- Must ensure that employees have access to the EPA Federal Employee Relocation Center for assistance with correct and necessary information before employees start their relocation move.

TRAVEL AUTHORIZING OFFICIALS

- Must know the specific requirements necessary for authorizing relocation.
- Must have proper authority to determine allowable travel expenses. Reimbursement for incurred expenses requires approval from employees' designated travel authorizing officials.
- Must exercise care in planning the relocation to ensure efficient use of time and money.
- Determine the purpose and necessity of a relocation assignment, the means of transportation and discretionary reimbursements, where applicable.
- Authorize only expenses that are absolutely essential to accomplish the objectives of the EPA's programs or missions consistent with the Federal Travel Regulation and the EPA relocation policies.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

- Sign appropriate documents to certify that they reviewed the relocation package.
- Issue a request to the Federal Employee Relocation Center to create a travel authorization for relocation before employees begin the transfer to the new official station.
- Inform employees of their transfer within a timeframe that provides employees sufficient time for preparation. Establish timeframes for employees' submission of travel requests under Federal Travel Regulation 301-52.7.
- Provide new employees with the applicable limitations of travel benefits provided under the Federal Travel Regulation and the EPA travel and relocation policies.

ORGANIZATIONS

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE RELOCATION CENTER

The Federal Employee Relocation Center, located at the Cincinnati Finance Center, acts as the liaison with program offices and regions to establish appropriate funding, approval and signatures prior to initiating the movement of relocating employees or new appointees. The Federal Employee Relocation Center has authority to provide entitlement counseling, schedule movement and storage of household goods, coordinate real estate services, establish destination services and deal with any special circumstances that occur during the course of relocation. Find additional information for the Federal Employee Relocation Center services at http://www.relocatefeds.gov. The Federal Employee Relocation Center:

- Prepares the travel authorization for domestic and international relocation.
- Coordinates the creation of the travel authorization; ensures proper obligation of funds and obtains approval from responsible program offices and travel authorizing officials.
- Coordinates with the Office of Human Resources and program offices regarding requirements for relocation.
- Contacts employees, within two business days, of the notification that authorizes the appropriate relocation.
- Provides one-on-one counseling to employees. Refer to the EPA Mass Mailer, dated 2/20/2007.
- Collaborates with employees in the creation of the travel voucher.
- Processes payment consistent with the *Prompt Payment Act* *after* employees and travel authorizing officials sign travel vouchers; and upon receipt of original travel vouchers and necessary receipts. For additional information, read the Federal Travel Regulation Part 301-52. Administers the EPA household goods program.
- Makes all necessary arrangements for transporting household goods, professional books, papers and equipment and temporary storage, including but not limited to packing/unpacking, crating/uncrating, pickup/delivery, weighing and line-haul under the actual expense method.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

- Issues a government bill of lading number to the Federal Employee Relocation Center -selected move management service provider. If the shipment exceeds 18,000 pounds, the maximum weight under the Federal Travel Regulation 302-7.2, the EPA pays the total charges and *employees reimburse* the EPA for the cost of transportation and other charges applicable to the excess weight.
- Advises employees on the federal government's liability for any loss and damage claims under 31 U.S.C. 3721-3723.
- Ensures that ships, used to transport international household goods shipments, are registered under the laws of the United States whenever such ships are available. See Section IX, International Relocation.
- Administers the EPA Home Marketing Incentive Payment Program.
- Receives authorization for employees' participation in the Home Marketing Incentive Payment Program from employees' program office approving officials and prepares the travel authorization for the program office approving officials' signature.
- Adheres to and applies the Federal Travel Regulation Part 302-11 to properly assess reimbursable residential expenses and creates employees' travel vouchers for processing review and payment.
- Prepares and provides relocation Form W-2, *Wage and Tax Statement* and Relocation Income Tax Allowance calculations.

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

The Office of Human Resources is the lead organization for announcement of positions eligible for relocation benefits and candidate selections. The Office of Human Resources communicates eligibility of candidates the EPA has selected for employment to program offices, which coordinate with the Federal Employee Relocation Center Relocation Counselor for initiation of the relocation process.

OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AND TRIBAL AFFAIRS

The Office of International and Tribal Affairs coordinates official foreign travel with the Department of State and American embassies and missions before employees perform business with officials of any foreign government or public international organization. The Office of International and Tribal Affairs is the point of contact for embassy and liaison support; passports; visas; health requirements; security clearances; and country clearances. For additional information, access the Office of International and Tribal Affairs Intranet site at http://intranet.epa.gov/OIA/index.html.

PROGRAM OFFICES

- Must maintain effective control over the relocation process for employees or new appointees to ensure that relocation is only authorized when it is in the interest of the federal government as necessary to accomplish the EPA's mission. Must plan official relocation travel in advance, when possible, to avoid short turnaround time constraints for employees or new appointees to perform relocation.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

- Authorize transportation of professional books, papers and equipment as a program office administrative expense.
- Authorize temporary storage in excess of the initial 90-day limit.
- Ensure that employees, not program offices, pay the charges for excess weight valuation above the maximum 18,000 pounds and services obtained at higher costs.
- May authorize commercial means of transportation for privately owned vehicles, if available at reasonable rates and under reasonable conditions.
- May authorize federal government means of transportation for privately owned vehicles on a space-available basis.
- Review travel vouchers for reimbursement of residence transaction expenses and forward to approving officials for signature.
- May authorize extensions beyond the two-year limitation for completing sales and purchase or lease termination transactions under Federal Travel Regulation 302-11.40 and 302-11.421.
- Require employees to submit travel vouchers that the Federal Employee Relocation Center provides with appropriate documentation to support employees' payment of expenses claimed, which must include:
    - The sales agreement when selling a residence. o The purchase agreement when purchasing a residence. o Property settlement documents.
    - Loan closing statements.
    - Invoices or receipts for other bills paid.
- Must review and approve employees' applications when employees transfer between agencies to a new official station, which is the responsibility of the program office in the locality of the employees' new official station, unless the hiring agency does not have an appropriate installation in the area. In that case, the agency that formerly employed the employees at the original official station must review and approve expenses.
- Authorizes transferring employees' participation in the Home Marketing Incentive Payment Program, only if employees transfer at the request of the EPA and at its expense.
- Is responsible for all costs associated with the Home Marketing Incentive Payment Program if the program office employs relocating employees.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

The EPA may pay relocation allowances for change of official station for:

- Employees transferring from one official station to another official station, when the transfer is primarily in the interest of the federal government, not for the convenience or benefit of employees or at their request.
- Student trainees assigned upon completion of college work to positions within the 50 states and the District of Columbia, which the Office of Personnel Management has determined that shortages exist.
- First official station relocation of eligible members of the Presidential transition team who relocate prior to selection for or appointment to certain federal government positions with limited allowances.
- New appointees who satisfy the conditions of new appointees under the guidelines of Federal Travel Regulation 302-1.1.
- Senior Executive Service career appointees' "last move home."
- Employees assigned to a temporary duty station in connection with long-term assignment.
- Eligible employees outside the continental United States traveling in connection with an overseas tour renewal agreement.
- Long-term assignments under the *Government Employees Training Act*, the *Intergovernmental Personnel Act* and the *Presidential Executive Interchange Program*.
- Regulatory provisions, in effect at the time employees report for duty at the new official station, to determine entitlements and allowances for relocation. However, this does not change the requirement that employees must complete all aspects of relocation according to the time specified in Federal Travel Regulation 302-2.7 through 302-2.11.

AGREEMENT TO REMAIN IN SERVICE

Employees must sign service agreements if they receive reimbursement for *domestic* or *international* relocation travel expenses for permanent change of official station; or perform renewal agreement travel. Under renewal agreement, employees serve additional tours of duty at the same or a different official station.

The EPA Form 3110-1, *Agreement to Remain in the Government,* requires employees to remain in service of the federal government for 12 months following the effective date of transfer. Note that employees may transfer from the EPA to another federal agency during this 12-month period without violating the "federal government service" term of the agreement. Employees must agree to the terms of the service agreement for:

- Relocation within the continental United States for a period of service of not less than 12 months following the effective date of their transfer.
- Relocation outside the continental United States for an agreed upon period of service of not more than 36 months or not less than 12 months following the effective date of transfer.