

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
FINANCE**

**Chapter 3 Temporary Duty Travel – Travel Payment Methods**

**3.1 What is the purpose of this chapter?** This chapter provides guidance for employees incurring charges for official travel.

**3.2 What is the scope of this chapter?** This chapter covers transportation, lodging, meals, and other costs that travelers may incur for temporary duty (TDY). The policy for permanent change of station allowances is in Part 266 of the Service Manual. Information on local travel is in the memorandum that the Assistant Director - Business Management and Operations issued on 02/23/2009.

**3.3 What is the policy?**

**A.** Employees who anticipate traveling on official business must apply for the Government charge card with the travel business line, also called the travel card, within 30 calendar days of their appointment. The following guidelines apply to using travel cards:

**(1)** Travelers must follow Federal, Department of the Interior, and Service policies when using the travel card to pay for expenses. Travelers must become familiar with the Service's charge card policies and procedures included in the Integrated Charge Card Program Guidance.

**(2)** Travelers may only use the travel card to incur travel-related expenses that are in their travel authorization.

**B.** We may issue travel advances to travelers who do not have access to a travel card or who are traveling to areas where the travel card is not widely accepted.

**C.** Employees may pay for expenses with cash or another personal method of payment when the travel card is not accepted or using it is not practical. Travelers may use personal cash or their travel card to make an automated teller machine (ATM) cash withdrawal.

**3.4 When may employees use the travel card?** Table 3-1 shows when employees may use the travel card.

<b>Table 3-1: Use of the Travel Card</b>			
<b>Expense Type</b>	<b>Permitted</b>		<b>Prohibited</b>
	<b>Mandatory</b>	<b>When Practical</b>	
Transportation tickets (e.g., airline, rail, ferry, bus tickets)	✓		
Transaction fees (e.g., travel booking fee, travel authorization/vouchering (TAV) fee) <sup>1</sup>	✓		
Lodging and lodging taxes	✓		
Rental vehicles and fuel	✓		
Fuel and oil for commercial rental vehicles	✓		
Meals and other official expenses		✓	
Taxis and shuttle buses		✓	
Laundry and dry cleaning		✓	
Parking		✓	

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Table 3-1: Use of the Travel Card			
Expense Type	Permitted		Prohibited
	Mandatory	When Practical	
Local ground transportation while in TDY status		✓	
Fuel or repair services for the employee's privately owned vehicle			✓
Rental vehicles for personal or unofficial use			✓
Travel expenses for a person other than the cardholder, including other Service employees <sup>2</sup>			✓
Local travel that is not associated with approved TDY travel			✓
Consultant or contractor travel <sup>3</sup>			✓
Reservation of a block of sleeping rooms, meeting rooms, equipment, or related services <sup>4</sup>			✓
Conference, training, and registration fees <sup>4</sup>			✓

<sup>1</sup> Service employees without a travel card should use a purchase card. Invitational travelers should use a corporate card.

<sup>2</sup> If a traveler does not have a travel card, he or she may receive a travel advance by submitting SF-1038 to the National Business Center (NBC).

<sup>3</sup> Contract should be used.

<sup>4</sup> Contract or purchase card should be used.

**3.5 May travelers obtain cash withdrawals using the travel card?** Yes, travelers may use the travel card to make ATM cash withdrawals to cover reimbursable meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) as part of TDY travel. Travelers may withdraw cash in the 5 calendar days before beginning travel (but no sooner) or while in travel status. Do not use the travel card to withdraw cash after the TDY trip.

**3.6 What is the total allowable amount of an ATM cash withdrawal for TDY travel?** We limit travelers' cash withdrawals to the lesser of the following two amounts:

- A. The cardholder's expected allowance for M&IE and reimbursable out-of-pocket expenses, such as local transportation at the TDY location and parking, or
- B. \$250 per day, but no more than \$500 per week.

**3.7 What else must a traveler be aware of when making an ATM cash withdrawal for TDY travel?**

- A. Travelers are charged a cash advance fee for making ATM withdrawals and may be charged an access fee for using an ATM that is not associated with the charge card vendor. The traveler must attach ATM cash withdrawal receipts to his or her receipt packet in the Service's electronic travel system to claim any fees associated with an ATM cash withdrawal.
- B. Travelers may only claim the amount associated with withdrawal fees and access fees and may not claim the amount of the cash withdrawal itself.

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**3.8 Who is responsible for paying the charge card vendor?** The traveler is responsible for paying the charge card vendor the full amount of the balance listed in the "New Balance" field on his or her account statement by the due date, regardless of whether the Service has issued payment for reimbursable costs listed on the travel voucher.

**3.9 When does the Service issue a travel advance?** We issue travel advances on a limited basis if the traveler:

- A. Declines the travel card,
- B. Does not qualify for the travel card (e.g., temporary employee, seasonal worker), or
- C. Is traveling to a location where the travel card is not widely accepted.

**3.10 How do travelers get a travel advance?**

A. Travelers must apply by completing the Advance of Funds Application and Account form (SF-1038) and the Trip-by-Trip Travel Advance Request Form (Form F265-3A) and sending them to the National Business Center (NBC).

B. If approved, the Service deposits the travel advance in the traveler's account using an electronic funds transfer.

**3.11 What are the minimum and maximum amounts for which the Service may issue a travel advance?**

A. We do not issue travel advances for less than \$50.00, except in cases of financial hardship. Travelers applying for an advance in an amount less than \$50.00 must include a justification with the request for the advance.

B. We limit the maximum amount of a travel advance to:

(1) 80% of the traveler's expected M&IE allowance, when the traveler is getting the advance because of the circumstances in section 3.9A above. Travel advances for extended TDY assignments are issued in 30 calendar day increments.

(2) 80% of the traveler's per diem allowance, when the traveler is getting the advance because of the circumstances in sections 3.9B or 3.9C above.

**3.12 How does a traveler repay the Service for a travel advance?** Travelers must repay the Service for travel advances when completing the travel voucher or by issuing a check to the Service and uploading a copy of the check to the receipt packet (check must be sent prior to filing travel voucher and include the relevant travel authorization number).

A. Regardless of how the traveler is repaying the Service, he or she must complete the Travel Advance Liquidation Form (FWS Form 3-2389) and attach it to the receipt packet for either method.

B. If the traveler repays the Service through the travel voucher process, he or she must use the electronic travel system to reduce his or her M&IE allowance or the total amount of another reimbursable expense (when M&IE is insufficient) by the amount of the travel advance. Instructions for how to notify NBC of the need to liquidate an advance are included with FWS Form 3-2389.

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C. NBC will liquidate the advance within 5 business days of receiving notice via email.

**3.13 What other methods may travelers use to pay for travel-related expenses?** Although travelers may use cash, a personal credit card, or another personal form of payment to pay for travel-related expenses when a vendor does not accept the travel card or paying with the travel card is not practical, travelers should consult with their Regional Travel Coordinator first. Cash purchase of airline tickets over \$100 requires approval by the traveler's supervisor and Regional Director or Assistant Director or designee. Travelers must use a travel voucher to request reimbursement for out-of-pocket travel expenses.

**3.14 Where can employees find additional information on the Service's Integrated Charge Card Program?** Refer to the Service's Integrated Charge Card Program Guidance for more information. Chapter 3 of the *Temporary Duty Handbook: A Guide to the TDY Process* includes information about the charge card program, travel advances, and other methods of payment.

**3.15 Who should employees contact with questions about the Service's Integrated Charge Card Program?** Contact your Regional Charge Card Coordinator with questions about our Integrated Charge Card Program. There is a list of the Regional Charge Card Coordinators in the Service's Integrated Charge Card Program Guidance.

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DIRECTOR

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