

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
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OVERVIEW

4.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter establishes policy and procedures for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) employees and non-employees (collectively called “travelers” throughout this chapter) for creating, approving, and updating travel authorizations for official Temporary Duty Travel (TDY) on behalf of the Service.

4.2 What is the scope of this chapter?

A. This chapter covers travel authorizations for travelers conducting TDY travel.

B. This chapter does not cover:

(1) Permanent Change of Station (PCS) travel (see [266 FW 1](#)),

(2) Temporary Change of Station (TCS) travel (see Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), [41 CFR Part 302, Subpart E](#)), or

(3) Local travel in and around a permanent duty station (see [265 FW 12](#)).

4.3 What is the overall policy?

A. Travelers must always obtain authorization from their approving official in the electronic travel system (i.e., ConcurGov) prior to performing TDY travel. The only exceptions to this requirement are bona fide emergency situations (see [265 FW 10](#)) when a travel authorization cannot be reasonably obtained in advance.

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B. We only reimburse travelers for the authorized expenses on the travel authorization. We do not reimburse travelers for expenses related to personal deviations.

C. We do not reimburse travelers for costs associated with unauthorized travel.

4.4 What are the authorities for this chapter? See [265 FW 1](#) for a list of the authorities for all the chapters in [Part 265](#).

4.5 What terms do you need to know to understand this chapter?

A. Approving officials are supervisors, Directorate members (i.e., Regional Directors; Assistant Directors; Director, National Conservation Training Center (NCTC); Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS)), and other officials who approve travel-related transactions (e.g., authorizations and vouchers).

B. CONUS is the acronym for the 48 contiguous states in the United States (i.e., all the states except Alaska and Hawaii).

C. Electronic travel system is an automated, web-based process that Service employees and approving officials use to plan, document, manage, and monitor TDY travel (see [265 FW 2](#)). ConcurGov is the Service's current electronic travel system.

D. Fly America Act requires all air travel and cargo transportation services that the Federal Government funds to use "U.S. flag" air carrier service.

E. OCONUS is the acronym for outside of the contiguous United States.

F. Personal deviation is when a traveler performs personal travel in conjunction with an official trip that impacts the cost of transportation or duration of the trip.

G. Prudent person rule states that travelers must exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business.

H. TDY travel is travel that is performed for official purposes and is over 50 miles from the traveler's permanent duty station and commuting residence.

I. Travel arranger is a staff member who books, documents, and adjusts travel reservations on behalf of others, including invitational travelers. The staff member could be a Service employee or a contractor.

J. Travel authorization is the form the Service uses to approve official TDY travel and travel-related expenses. These forms are created and approved in the electronic travel system. All travelers must receive authorization from their approving official before traveling, except in bona fide emergencies (see [265 FW 10](#) for more information).

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K. Travel Management Center (TMC) (i.e., Duluth Travel, Inc. or El Sol Travel, Inc.) is responsible for assisting travelers with booking and adjusting travel itineraries. The TMC charges higher fees to assist with booking travel and adjusting reservations than those associated with self-service booking through ConcurGov.

RESPONSIBILITIES

4.6 What are the responsibilities related to travel authorizations? See Table 4-1.

Table 4-1: Responsibilities for Travel Authorizations

These employees...	Are responsible for...
A. The Director	Approving or declining to approve Servicewide policy.
B. Joint Administrative Operations (JAO), Administrative Operations Center (AOC), Financial Operations Division Chief	Providing guidance on TDY travel-related issues as necessary.
C. JAO AOC Travel and Charge Card Operations Branch Chief	Providing guidance on TDY travel-related issues as necessary.
D. JAO AOC Travel Team (i.e., Federal Agency Travel Administrators (FATA), Audit team, Help Desk team)	<p>(1) Providing travelers with guidance on the FTR and on Department of the Interior (Department) and Service travel policies,</p> <p>(2) Performing a Fly America Act compliance review on travel authorizations to foreign destinations, and</p> <p>(3) Assisting travelers and travel arrangers with technical issues associated with the electronic travel system.</p>
E. Approving officials	<p>(1) Familiarizing themselves with TDY travel policy,</p> <p>(2) Complying with the FTR and Departmental and Service policies,</p> <p>(3) Reviewing and approving TDY travel authorizations and vouchers,</p> <p>(4) Determining if travel is necessary to achieve the official purpose of the proposed trip (i.e., asking “Are there effective and less expensive alternatives to travel?”),</p> <p>(5) Ensuring that travelers follow the prudent person rule and use the most direct route and mode of transportation (see 265 FW 5),</p>

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These employees...	Are responsible for...
	<p>(6) Supporting the Department’s effort to reduce our carbon footprint by focusing on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions whenever possible and advantageous to the Government (e.g., using public transit instead of a rental car), and</p> <p>(7) Using the electronic travel system in adherence with the FTR.</p>
F. Travelers	<p>(1) Familiarizing themselves with TDY travel policy,</p> <p>(2) Complying with the FTR and Departmental and Service policies,</p> <p>(3) Requesting approval(s) to travel prior to leaving for trips,</p> <p>(4) Supporting the Department’s effort to reduce our carbon footprint by focusing on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions whenever possible and advantageous to the Government (e.g., using public transit instead of a rental car), and</p> <p>(5) Using the electronic travel system in adherence with the FTR.</p>
G. Travel arrangers	<p>(1) Familiarizing themselves with TDY travel policy,</p> <p>(2) Using the electronic travel system in adherence with the FTR,</p> <p>(3) Assisting non-employee travelers in obtaining user profiles, and</p> <p>(4) Acting on behalf of non-employee travelers by completing required actions in the electronic travel system (e.g., arranging transportation, creating travel vouchers, etc.) (see 265 FW 8).</p>

TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS

4.7 How does the Service document travel authorizations?

A. Trip-by-trip authorizations are the most common type of authorization. They authorize travelers to take one or more specific official business trips, and each authorization must include the specific purpose, itinerary, and estimated costs. Trip-by-trip authorizations are:

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- (1) Created in the electronic travel system, and
- (2) Approved in the electronic travel system by an approving official at least one level in supervision above the traveler.

B. Limited Open Travel Authorizations (LOTA) allow a traveler to travel on official business without further authorization under certain specific conditions. LOTAs allow a traveler to travel to a specific CONUS geographic area(s) for a specific purpose(s), subject to trip cost ceilings, or for specific periods of time. LOTAs are:

- (1) Issued on an annual basis;
- (2) Documented on the Travel Authorization [Form DI-1020](#);
- (3) Approved by an approving official at least one level in supervision above the traveler;
- (4) Duplicated in the electronic travel system to document transportation, lodging, and Meals and Incidental Expense (M&IE) costs for each trip; and
- (5) Not valid for the types of travel we discuss in [section 4.8](#) below.

C. Unlimited Open Travel Authorizations (UOTA) allow Directorate members to travel within CONUS for any official purpose without further authorization. UOTAs are:

- (1) Issued on an annual basis;
- (2) Documented on Travel Authorization [Form DI-1020](#);
- (3) Approved by the Director;
- (4) Duplicated in the electronic travel system to document transportation, lodging, and M&IE costs for each trip; and
- (5) Not valid for the types of travel we discuss in [section 4.8](#) below.

4.8 What types of travel require a trip-by-trip authorization? The following types of travel must be approved on a trip-by-trip authorization:

A. Conference travel. The only time a trip-by-trip travel authorization is not required for conferences is for internal meetings that the approving official has approved as exempt from the conference planning process (see [265 FW 11](#)).

B. Training-related travel. Under the provisions of the [Training Act](#), travelers may only claim reimbursement for expenses that are specifically authorized for training-related travel.

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C. Foreign travel. Approving officials must ensure that travelers performing foreign travel comply with the [Fly America Act](#), General Services Administration City Pair program contract (see [265 FW 5](#)), direct routing requirements, and policies that the Department's [Office of International Affairs](#) has established.

D. Invitational travel. Once directed, travel arrangers should attempt to coordinate travel and arrange lodging for invitational travelers through the electronic travel system whenever possible (see [265 FW 8](#)).

E. Travel costs received from a non-Federal source. Congress highly scrutinizes donated travel, and it requires a trip-by-trip authorization to ensure proper documentation and reconciliation of payment arrangements between the donor organization and the traveler. Travelers must obtain pre-approval from the Departmental [Ethics office](#) before accepting donated travel funds (see [212 FW 3](#)).

F. Extended TDY assignments. TDY trips of 30 consecutive calendar days or longer that are at one destination are considered extended assignments (see [265 FW 9](#)).

4.9 What types of expenses require specific authorization in addition to the standard approval on the travel authorization? Some types of travel expenses require additional specific prior approval on the travel authorization. See Table 4-2 for a list, including a reference to the policy where a traveler can find out who must approve the expense. In some cases, more than one person may have to review and approve it.

Table 4-2: Expenses Requiring Prior Approvals

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use and authorized upgrade of a rental car (see 265 FW 5)• Payment of actual expense reimbursement (see 265 FW 6)• Travel expenses related to conference attendance (see 265 FW 11)• Use of other than coach-class service on common carrier transportation (see 265 FW 5)• Acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source for travel expenses (see section 4.12 and 212 FW 3)• Use of cash to pay for common carrier transportation (see 265 FW 5)• Travel expenses related to foreign travel (see Department's Office of International Affairs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of a Government aircraft (see 265 FW 5)• Travel by ship (see 265 FW 5)• Payment of a reduced per diem rate (see 265 FW 6)• Use of reduced fares for group or charter arrangements (see 265 FW 5)• Travel expenses related to employee emergency travel (see 265 FW 10)• Transportation expenses related to threatened law enforcement or investigative employees and members of their families (see 265 FW 5)• Payment of the full M&IE allowance when meals are furnished by the Government, but the traveler's religion or dietary needs prevent consumption of these meals (see 265 FW 6)
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of a foreign air carrier when no U.S. flag carrier is available (see 265 FW 5)• Use of extra-fare train service (see 265 FW 5) | |
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4.10 How does a traveler or travel arranger create an authorization in the electronic travel system?

A. Travelers/travel arrangers must use the electronic travel system to create a travel authorization documenting each of the following items:

(1) *Travel reservations and basic trip information:*

(a) The traveler/travel arranger makes the travel reservations first in the electronic travel system and then confirms or adjusts the information pre-populated in the travel authorization, and

(b) Then they must ensure that the travel authorization includes only allowable expenses and entitlements.

(2) *Discretionary entitlements.* Such items (e.g., rental cars, excess baggage, premium accommodations, actual expense lodging rates, excess M&IE, etc.) must include a thorough and complete justification on the travel authorization.

B. After completing a travel authorization, the traveler or travel arranger must sign it using an electronic signature in the electronic travel system. Affixing an electronic signature to a document is as legally binding as a written signature. Travelers must ensure they provide accurate and complete information.

4.11 How are travel authorizations approved?

A. An approving official at least one level in supervision above the traveler approves the travel authorization created in the electronic travel system.

B. The approving official should review the travel authorization within 3 business days of receiving it. If the approving official is out of the office, a designated alternate approving official may approve travel authorizations. The travel authorization review is to verify that the estimated costs are reasonable and appropriate, and that none of the requested entitlements require a higher level of approval.

C. Approving officials must document approvals by:

(1) *For Limited or Unlimited Open Travel Authorizations (LOTAs/UOTAs),* the approving official must ensure the traveler has:

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- (a) Included a copy of the approved Travel Authorization [Form DI-1020](#) as part of the receipt packet,
- (b) Completed the TDY Travel – Discretionary and Trip-by-Trip Entitlements Form ([FWS Form 3-2388](#)) to address any entitlements or expenses that the LOTA or UOTA does not cover, and
- (c) Obtained the required signatures on the TDY Travel – Discretionary and Trip-by-Trip Entitlements Form ([FWS Form 3-2388](#)) and included a copy of the signed form in the receipt packet.

(2) *For trip-by-trip authorizations*, the electronic travel system routes the travel authorization to the traveler's approving official for approval. The electronic travel system creates an official record of approval when the approving official logs into the system and approves the travel authorization.

D. If the traveler is requesting a discretionary entitlement above the actual expense level, the approval must be documented on the TDY Travel – Discretionary and Trip-by-Trip Entitlements Form ([FWS Form 3-2388](#)) or there must be another supplemental approval (e.g., email), both of which must be included in the receipt packet. Approval levels may be found:

- (1) For actual expense, in [265 FW 6](#), and
- (2) For transportation upgrades, in [265 FW 5](#).

4.12 How does the Service handle travel funded from another Government agency or a non-Federal source? The traveler must obtain pre-authorization to conduct TDY travel in these circumstances. We use the United States Government Order Form (Treasury Form [7600B](#)) or Inter/Intra-Agency Travel Agreement Form ([FWS Form 3-2368](#)) as our reimbursable agreement to document when another bureau/agency funds the travel expenses of a Service employee (see [264 FW 2](#)). This form also ensures the bureau/agency has the necessary information to process reimbursement. The Service employee should make all the travel arrangements through the electronic travel system, and we will bill for reimbursement. Also see [212 FW 3](#) for information about accepting payment from a non-Federal source (i.e., donated travel).

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