

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
FINANCE**

Finance

Part 265 Travel

Chapter 7 Temporary Duty Travel – Employee Reimbursement

265 FW 7

7.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter provides guidance for employees completing travel vouchers.

7.2 What is the scope of this chapter? This chapter covers employee reimbursement for temporary duty (TDY) travel. The policy for permanent change of station (PCS) 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. The policy covering reimbursement for non-Service employees is in 265 FW 8.

7.3 What is the policy?

A. A traveler must submit a travel voucher, required receipts, and any supporting documentation in the electronic travel system within 5 business days after the trip.

B. The traveler's Approving Official must review the travel voucher within a reasonable period of time following receipt.

C. The traveler will receive reimbursement within 30 calendar days of submitting the travel voucher. Regardless of when travelers receive reimbursement, they must pay their Government charge card statement in full every month.

7.4 What costs must be included on the travel voucher? The traveler must include the following costs on the travel voucher:

A. Allowable transportation costs (see 265 FW 5);

B. Allowable lodging, meals, and incidental expenses (see 265 FW 6); and

C. Other allowable expenses (see section 7.5).

7.5 What other expenses are allowable and how do travelers document them?

A. In addition to transportation costs and allowable lodging, meals, and incidental expenses, we cover some additional travel-related expenses when required for official travel. A traveler should include all anticipated expenses on the travel authorization. When travelers incur unexpected expenses that are not addressed on the travel authorization, they may add some of them directly to the travel voucher. Others may require that the traveler amend the travel authorization or obtain approval outside the system before creating a travel voucher.

B. Table 7-1 describes the types of allowable expenses travelers may include on the voucher, and the types that require additional approval.

| Table 7-1: Documenting Unexpected Expenses | |
|---|--|
| Must be specifically pre-authorized - <i>Require supplemental approval</i> | May be added directly to a travel voucher - <i>Do not require supplemental approval if not approved prior to travel</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services of guides, interpreters, shipping companies (e.g., FedEx), drivers, typists, data processors, and stenographers • Fees associated with the use of traveler's checks, money orders, and certified checks • Charges associated with the use of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATM fees (e.g., access fees, cash advance fees) • Baggage charges when checking one or two bags under the allowable weight limit • Fuel and oil for commercial rental vehicles (not privately owned vehicles (POVs)) |

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| Table 7-1: Documenting Unexpected Expenses | |
|---|--|
| Must be specifically pre-authorized - <i>Require supplemental approval</i> | May be added directly to a travel voucher - <i>Do not require supplemental approval if not approved prior to travel</i> |
| <p>computers, Internet service, printers, fax machines, telephones, and scanners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baggage charges when checking more than two bags or when transporting Government equipment that exceeds the airline's weight limit for baggage • Lodging fees (e.g., reservation fees, deposits) when the property will not waive these fees for Government travelers • Transportation and storage of property used on official business | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking • Tolls • Fees charged by the travel management center • Travel authorization/vouchering (TAV) fee • Lodging taxes • Energy surcharge applied by a hotel • Laundry, cleaning, and pressing of clothing when the trip requires four or more consecutive nights of lodging • Daily personal phone calls using most cost-efficient method available (limited to 3-5 minutes or approximate cost of \$5.00 per day) |

7.6 If travelers have special needs, are there any additional expenses that they can claim? To claim some additional expenses, travelers with special needs must give their Approving Official a current statement issued by a medical authority that describes the condition. They must also get the Approving Official's approval before traveling to claim reimbursement for any of the following expenses:

- A.** Transportation and per diem expenses incurred by a family member or other attendant who must travel with the employee because of the special need;
- B.** Specialized transportation to, from, or at the TDY location;
- C.** Specialized services from a travel vendor to accommodate the traveler's special need;
- D.** Baggage handling costs that are a direct result of the special need;
- E.** Costs associated with renting or transporting a wheelchair; and
- F.** Premium accommodations when medically necessary (see 265 FW 5 for additional information on obtaining approval for premium accommodations).

7.7 How does the traveler create a travel voucher? A traveler must complete the steps below to create and submit a travel voucher within 5 business days of the conclusion of a TDY trip.

A. Review travel authorization:

(1) The traveler should review the travel authorization in the electronic travel system and consider whether the itinerary differs from the actual trip. The traveler must amend the travel authorization in the following circumstances:

- (a)** Travel to a location not on the original travel authorization.
- (b)** Adjusting the timeframe of the trip and traveling on dates not on the original travel authorization.

(2) If the traveler must amend the travel authorization, the supervisor must approve the change before the traveler creates a travel voucher.

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(3) If travelers require post-travel approval on a travel expense or entitlement that does not impact trip locations or dates, they may obtain approval outside the system (e.g., FWS Form 3-2388) and include the approval as part of the receipt packet without resubmitting the authorization.

B. Confirm transportation costs, per diem entitlements, and other expenses:

(1) Once a traveler finalizes the travel authorization, he or she must use the electronic travel system to create a travel voucher. The traveler must:

(a) Use the travel voucher to capture the actual costs incurred during the trip, and

(b) Account for any discrepancies between the travel authorization and actual trip that did not require an amendment of the travel authorization.

(2) Travelers must claim reimbursement for any expenses under the default method of reimbursement in the electronic travel system, unless they used cash or another personal form of payment to pay for the expense. If travelers use a method of reimbursement other than the default method, they must include an explanation of the situation in the travel voucher.

C. Confirm and update lines of accounting: The traveler must review the lines of accounting and confirm that each expense is allocated appropriately. It is the traveler's responsibility to reallocate expenses as needed.

D. Submit required receipts and supporting documentation: The traveler must include all required receipts and supporting documents with the travel voucher.

E. Sign travel voucher: The traveler must sign the completed voucher. Affixing an electronic signature to a document is a legally binding action. Travelers must ensure that the information provided is accurate and complete.

7.8 What receipts must travelers submit with their vouchers?

A. Travelers must submit itemized receipts for any expenses of \$75 or more, excluding meals and incidental expenses, for which they receive Lodgings-Plus per diem.

B. Travelers must also submit itemized receipts for the following expenses, regardless of the cost associated with the expense:

(1) Transportation expenses (e.g., airline, rail, ferry, and bus tickets; taxis; shuttles; parking; baggage fees);

(2) Lodging, including lodging cancellation fees;

(3) Official business phone calls and other communication expenses, unless using a coin operated phone or the Government calling card;

(4) Daily personal phone call using the most cost-efficient method available (limited to \$5.00 per day);

(5) Rental car and fuel;

(6) ATM fees;

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- (7) Laundry and dry cleaning;
- (8) Currency conversion fees; and
- (9) Meals reimbursed under the Actual Subsistence method.

7.9 What other supporting documents must travelers submit with their vouchers? A traveler must attach supporting documentation as part of the receipt packet when any of the following situations apply to the TDY trip:

- A.** If we authorize a trip under a Limited Open or Unlimited Open Travel Authorization, the traveler must attach a copy of the authorization.
- B.** If a traveler completes a cost comparison using FWS Form 3-2387, he or she must attach a copy of the signed form, screenshots of any flight prices used in the comparison, and a copy of any itinerary the travel management center books.
- C.** If a traveler obtains approval to travel in premium accommodations (e.g., first class, business class, coach class upgrade) at the expense of the Service, he or she must attach a copy of the approval (e.g., FWS Form 3-2388).
- D.** If a traveler obtains a medical waiver from flying, he or she must attach a copy of the waiver.
- E.** If a traveler obtains approval to book a non-contract airfare, he or she must attach a copy of the approval (e.g., FWS Form 3-2388).
- F.** If a traveler obtains approval to claim per diem under the Actual Subsistence method, he or she must attach a copy of the approval (e.g., FWS Form 3-2388).
- G.** If a traveler obtains approval to claim per diem for travel to a TDY location fewer than 50 miles from his or her residence and permanent duty station, the traveler must attach a copy of the approval (e.g., FWS Form 3-2388).
- H.** If an Approving Official requests clarification on a travel-related expense, the traveler must attach a copy of the correspondence.
- I.** If a traveler obtains approval to conduct international travel, he or she must attach a copy of the International Travel Approval Package.
- J.** If a traveler is conducting personal travel in conjunction with official travel, he or she must attach a copy of the QuickTime leave form and FWS Form 3-2387 (if transportation cost is impacted) or FWS Form 3-2388 (if transportation cost is not impacted).
- K.** If a traveler is in an accident in a rental car, he or she must attach the accident report and the billing statement.
- L.** If a traveler owes any amount to the Service for excess reimbursement, and elects not to deduct the amount from his or her M&IE allowance or receives insufficient M&IE to cover the expense, he or she must attach a copy of the payment to the Service and the collection transmittal letter.
- M.** If a traveler obtains any other travel-related approval outside of the electronic travel system (e.g., email), he or she must attach a copy of the approval.

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7.10 What is the process for submitting receipts and supporting documentation? Travelers must submit receipts and supporting documentation using one of the following methods:

- A. Scan the receipts and documentation and upload it into the electronic travel system, or
- B. Fax hard copy receipts and documentation into the electronic travel system.

7.11 How long does the Service maintain travel documentation? We maintain travel documentation, including travel vouchers, receipts, and supporting documents, in the electronic travel system for a minimum of 6 years and 3 months following the end date of the TDY trip.

7.12 Who can approve a travel voucher?

- A. A supervisor at least one level above the traveler may approve the voucher.
- B. If the supervisor is out of the office, a designated alternate Approving Official may approve travel documentation.

7.13 What is the process for reviewing a travel voucher? Approving Officials:

A. Must access the travel voucher, receipts, and supporting documentation in the electronic travel system and review the costs included on the voucher for reasonableness. It is the Approving Official's responsibility to ensure that each charge included on the travel voucher is supported by the appropriate pre-authorization or approval documentation.

B. Must confirm that the traveler selected the default method of reimbursement for each expense included on the travel voucher. If the traveler selected an alternate method of reimbursement, the Approving Official must review the explanation provided by the traveler and any receipts or supporting documentation to confirm that the method is accurate and appropriate.

C. May approve the travel voucher only if they agree with all of the expenses included on the voucher. If an Approving Official disagrees with any of the costs or requires further clarification, he or she must electronically return the voucher to the traveler with a note about the required change and discuss the issue with the traveler.

7.14 How does a traveler amend a travel voucher? The process for amending a travel voucher depends on the status of the voucher in the electronic travel system when the traveler or Approving Official identifies a need for a change.

- A. Travelers who need to change a voucher before it is signed must edit the current version in the electronic travel system.
- B. An Approving Official who needs the traveler to change a voucher based on review must electronically return the voucher to the traveler with a note about the required change. The traveler must edit the current version in the electronic travel system and sign the updated version. The electronic travel system routes the updated version to the Approving Official for review and approval.
- C. Travelers who need to change a voucher after the Approving Official signs it must amend the voucher in the electronic travel system and re-submit it for the necessary approvals.

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(1) The traveler must include an explanation of the change in the updated version of the voucher (e.g., the National Business Center identified a compliance issue requiring modification during the post-audit process).

(2) A traveler may upload additional supporting documentation to the receipt packet without amending the travel voucher.

(3) Travelers may not adjust costs included in a travel voucher that has been paid.

(4) If a traveler owes money to the Service, the traveler may not change any of the dollar amounts in the voucher. The traveler must send a check to his or her Collection Officer (include the relevant travel authorization number on the check), and fax a copy of the payment made to the Service and the corresponding collection transmittal letter into the receipt packet. The traveler does not need to re-submit the voucher for any additional approvals.

7.15 How does the Service reimburse employees? We reimburse the traveler for individually billed items through an Electronic Fund Transfer direct deposit. We pay the charge card vendor for centrally billed items.

7.16 Where can employees find additional information about the reimbursement process? Chapter 7 of the *Temporary Duty Handbook: A Guide to the TDY Process* has more information about employee reimbursement, including examples and screenshots from the electronic travel system.

7.17 Who should employees contact with questions about the reimbursement process? Contact your Regional Travel Coordinator with questions about the reimbursement process. There is a list of the Regional Travel Coordinators in the *Temporary Duty Handbook: A Guide to the TDY Process*.

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DIRECTOR

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