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OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

TRAVEL BULLETIN #10, FY08

SUBJECT: Premium Class Seat Assignments

EFFECTIVE DATE: August 5, 2008

EXPIRATION DATE: Effective until canceled or superseded.

BACKGROUND: The General Services Administration has issued guidance to Federal agencies regarding the choice to pay extra for "premium" seat assignments.

PURPOSE: To inform employees that GSA contracts with airlines to purchase commercial service at highly discounted fares. These services are purchased for federal travelers to obtain the lowest coach fare (with few exceptions). GSA views upgrades to "Premium Seating" as a personal choice that should be personally funded and not an allowable reimbursable expense.

PROCEDURES: Many airlines now charge for seats they have designated as "choice or premium," such as aisle, front of the cabin, larger seats, and window seats; and, the cost associated with premium seating varies by carrier. The choice to pay extra for "choice or premium" seats is borne by the employee. The Government is not required to reimburse the employee for premium seating. The exception to this rule is noted in the Federal Travel Regulation, section 301-13, "Travel of an Employee with Special Needs." This regulation allows the Government to reimburse employees for this travel expense when it is necessary to accommodate a special physical need that is either clearly visible and discernible or substantiated in writing by a competent medical authority. Additionally, early arrival for check-in at the airport or online check-in before arriving at the airport may improve seat selection. Travelers run the risk of losing pre-reserved seats with late check-in times as seat assignments may be released close to departure time and assigned to other passengers.

REFERENCES: GSA Fact Sheet and FAQs.

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