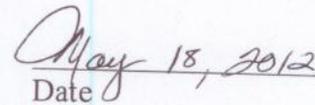

Approved for Release
Mary C. Pleffner
Director for Administrative Services


Date

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE (DOC)
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

TRAVEL BULLETIN #06, FY12

SUBJECT: Use of FedRooms

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 1, 2012

EXPIRATION DATE: Effective until canceled or superseded.

PURPOSE: This bulletin changes DOC travel policy to require, when available and more cost effective, the use of GSA's FedRooms program for lodging while on official travel. Additionally, this bulletin reiterates the mandatory requirement for all DOC travelers to utilize its travel management service (ADTRAV, SATO (PTO only), US Travel in Alaska, and Panda Travel in Hawaii) when making ALL travel arrangements (including air, lodging, rental car, and common carrier reservations).

BACKGROUND: In response to Executive Order (EO) 13589 – Promoting Efficient Spending, dated November 9, 2011; the Federal Government must minimize administrative costs and identify opportunities to promote efficient and effective spending while performing mission critical functions.

The Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) §301-11.11 states, Travelers “must make lodging reservations through their agency's travel management service and when selecting a commercial lodging facility, first consideration must be given to government lodging agreement programs such as FedRooms.” FedRooms is a GSA program that provides hotel rooms for Federal government travelers while on official business. FedRooms leverages the government buying power to offer safe, economical, and compliant hotel lodging at or below per diem. FedRooms offers specially negotiated Federal government hotel rates with FEMA certified hotels, simplifying hotel selections for Federal travelers. These rates include value-added amenities unavailable through other government programs or websites which reduce travel costs for government agencies. By requiring the use of FedRooms, the Department will promote spending efficiency by reducing per diem costs and ensuring our travelers are lodging in safe accommodations.

Note: First priority consideration must be given to FedRooms; second priority consideration must be given to hotels that offer a government rate within per diem. Many hotels offer

government rates that are not within per diem. These rates are set by the hotel, are not managed by the Federal government, and are not part of the official government-wide lodging program, FedRooms. Travelers are encouraged to utilize FedRooms when it is the most cost effective lodging choice when on business travel.

Benefits FedRooms can offer government travelers include:

- Nearly 12,000 hotels in 2,500+ cities around the world
- Rates are always at or below per diem
- 4 pm day of arrival cancellation policy
- No early departure fees
- No advance lodging or deposit fees
- FEMA certified to ensure compliance with fire and safety regulations
- No minimum stay and no resort or booking fees
- Participating hotels include: Hilton, Fairmont, Sheraton, W Hotel, Westin, Holiday Inn, Crown Plaza – 90+ hotel chains

POLICY: When available and cost effective, travelers must utilize FedRooms lodging for all official travel requiring the use of commercial lodging facilities. FedRooms properties must be used regardless of whether or not they offer reward points or other benefits. If the traveler is not using a FedRooms property, an exception must be provided on the travel authorization and provided to the Travel Management Center (ADTRAV, if making telephonic travel arrangements) prior to travel.

PROCEDURES: All hotel reservations must be made through the DOC's Travel Management Center (TMC), ADTRAV, its subcontractors (US Travel in Alaska and Panda Travel in Hawaii) or the online booking tool in FedTraveler.com. In FedTraveler.com, FedRooms properties are marked with a star inside a small box. Travelers can research FedRooms lodgings at www.FedRooms.com.

If a FedRooms property is available within the vicinity of the temporary duty location and the traveler is unable to stay there due to reasons acceptable to the traveler's approving official, the exception must be indicated on the travel authorization. If no FedRooms property is available, the travel authorization must be so annotated.

The Department will monitor FedRooms use for compliance and reporting to OMB. If it is determined that a traveler did not stay at a FedRooms property without sufficient or acceptable justification, he/she may be required to pay the difference between the FedRooms cost and the lodging cost for the hotel in which he/she stayed.

Exceptions: Exceptions to the use of FedRooms may be authorized only for the following reasons and only up to the prescribed maximum lodging rate, except in accordance with Bulletin #03, FY12:

1. Lodging procured at a prearranged place such as a hotel where a meeting, conference, or training is being held;
2. Special security-related mission requirements;

3. FedRooms property is not within walking distance of a Metro or the location where the temporary duty will be performed (does not apply if the traveler is authorized a rental car; however, commuting to a FedRooms property is not justification for authorizing a rental car);
4. The total cost of alternate lodging is more cost effective (If using this exception, a cost comparison must be prepared as part of the travel authorization); and
5. There are no FedRooms properties available at the TDY destination.

Personal preference or convenience is never a condition for which an exception to the use of FedRooms can be authorized.

Explanation: An exception for not using an available FedRooms property must be included on the travel authorization and relayed to the TMC travel agent making the lodging reservations. The traveler must ensure the exception indicates how the use of a FedRooms property would negatively affect the traveler, unusual circumstances at the temporary duty location preventing the traveler from using FedRooms, the increased cost of using a FedRooms property, or the distance to the closest FedRooms property from the temporary duty location, which precludes walking or taking metro.

Compliance: Under the terms of its contract with DOC, ADTRAV is required to ensure all travel arrangements comply with DOC travel policy, which includes the use of FedRooms lodgings when appropriate.

Monitoring/Reporting: To ensure compliance with this policy, ADTRAV will provide management reports to the Department on the use of FedRooms lodging.

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