


Approved for Release
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Date

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

TRAVEL BULLETIN #12, FY11

SUBJECT: Other than Coach-Class Train Accommodations

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

EXPIRATION DATE: Effective until canceled or superseded

PURPOSE: To provide guidance for the use and approval of other than coach-class train accommodations. Other than coach-class includes any class of accommodations that is above coach, e.g., first-class or business-class. If a train has only two classes of accommodations available, i.e., first and business-class, business-class will be considered as coach-class for purposes of official travel because it is the lowest fare offered.

BACKGROUND: Coach is the basic class of accommodations offered to passengers by a rail carrier that includes a level of service available to all passengers regardless of the fare paid. Coach-class includes reserved coach accommodations as well as slumber coach accommodations when overnight train travel is involved. Section 301-10.161 of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) states, "You must use coach-class accommodations for all train travel, except when your agency authorizes other than coach-class service."

Below is a list of approved exceptions to the use of other than coach-class train accommodations found in Section 301-10.162 of the FTR:

- You may use other than coach-class train accommodations only when your agency specifically authorizes/approves this use under paragraphs (a) through (e) of this section.
- (a) No coach-class accommodations are reasonably available on a train that is scheduled to leave within 24 hours of your proposed departure time, or scheduled to arrive within 24 hours of your proposed arrival time;
 - (b) When use of other than coach-class accommodations is necessary to accommodate a medical disability or other special need.

(1) A disability must be certified annually in a written statement by a competent medical authority. However, if the disability is a lifelong condition, then a one-time certification statement is required. Certification statements must include at a minimum:

- (i) A written statement by a competent medical authority stating that special accommodation is necessary;
- (ii) An approximate duration of the special accommodation; and
- (iii) A recommendation as to the suitable class of transportation accommodations based on the disability.

(2) A special need must be certified annually in writing according to your agency's procedures. However, if the special need is a lifelong condition, then a one-time certification statement is required;

(3) If you are authorized under §301-13.3(a) of the FTR, to have an attendant accompany you, your agency may also authorize the attendant to use other than coach-class accommodations if you require the attendant's services en route;

(c) When exceptional security circumstances require other than coach-class rail accommodations. Exceptional security circumstances are determined by your agency and should only be authorized to the minimum other than coach-class accommodation necessary to meet the agency's mission. These circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Use of coach-class accommodations would endanger your life or Government property;
- (2) You are an agent on protective detail and you are accompanying an individual authorized to use other than coach-class accommodations; or
- (3) You are a courier or control officer accompanying controlled pouches or packages;
- (d) Coach-class accommodations on an authorized/approved foreign rail carrier do not provide adequate sanitation or health standards; or
- (e) When required because of agency mission, consistent with your agency's internal procedures under §301-70.102(i) of the FTR.

Section C301-10.121 of the DOC Travel Handbook states, "The CFO/ASA must authorize and approve premium class air and train accommodations for all Office the Secretary employees, Secretarial Officers, and Heads of Operating Units that report directly to the Secretary."

Section C301-10.162 of the DOC Travel Handbook states, "If the traveler uses other than coach-class train accommodations without prior approval, the reimbursement will be limited to the cost of traveling by coach-class train."

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