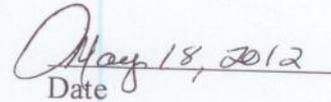

Approved for Release
Mary C. Pleffner
Director for Administrative Services


Date

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

TRAVEL BULLETIN #03, FY12

SUBJECT: Justification for Actual Expense Authorizations for Lodging Expense Above Per Diem

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 1, 2012

EXPIRATION DATE: Effective until canceled or superseded.

PURPOSE: This bulletin serves to update DOC travel policy related to authorizations for actual expenses.

BACKGROUND: Actual expense reimbursement allows a traveler to be reimbursed, in unusual circumstances, for actual and necessary expenses that exceed the maximum locality per diem rate for lodging. FTR 301-11 provides details on use of actual expenses and per diem expenses.

Conditions: Actual expense reimbursement may only be authorized for travel when the locality per diem rate for lodging is insufficient for the travel assignment. Personal preference or convenience is never a condition for which actual lodging expense can be authorized. (Note: M&IE may only be reimbursed up to the per diem rate.)

Justification: Approval for reimbursement of actual lodging expenses above the per diem rate must be minimized, utilizing only when in the best interest of the government. Justification for the use of actual lodging expenses must be included on the travel authorization and must indicate the unusual circumstances at the temporary duty location preventing the traveler from subsisting within the locality per diem lodging rate. Conditions for which actual lodging expenses may be authorized are:

- a. Lodging procured at a prearranged place such as a hotel where a meeting, conference or training is being held;
- b. Local costs have escalated due to special or unforeseen events and lodging within the locality per diem rate cannot be obtained nearby; or

- c. Mission necessity which requires the traveler to procure superior lodging accommodations.

Amount: The Department has determined that actual lodging expense reimbursement may be authorized up to 300% over the per diem rate. If the traveler is authorized actual expenses for lodging, lodging expenses must be itemized per day. When actual lodging expenses are less than the amount authorized, reimbursement is limited to the lodging expenses incurred.

Example: If a traveler is approved for actual lodging expenses, the maximum allowable lodging expense is determined by multiplying the lodging portion of the locality per diem rate by 3.

Approvals: Chief Operating Officers, and CFOs or individuals of comparable rank, with no authority to delegate further. These individuals have the ultimate responsibility to ensure travel is completed in the most cost effective and efficient way possible.

Monitoring/Reporting: The Office of Administrative Services (OAS) will, on a quarterly basis, analyze and prepare reports on "spend above per diem" from GSA's Travel Management Information System (TMIS). Additionally, OAS may request periodic reports from the individual Bureaus.

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