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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT

DIRECTIVES SYSTEM

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Subject: DOMESTIC TEMPORARY DUTY TRAVEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Approval: [signature] **Title:** Acting Director

1. Purpose. This directive establishes the Domestic Temporary Duty Travel Policies and Procedures Handbook, incorporates its contents into the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) Directives System, and informs all OSMRE employees of its availability.

2. Summary. The Handbook sets forth policies and procedures for the conduct of domestic temporary duty travel by OSMRE employees. The Manual supplements the guidelines in the Federal Travel Regulations and in the Department of the Interior Regulations and Manual.

3. Definitions. None.

4. Policy/Procedures. The policies and procedures set forth in the Handbook are to be followed by all OSMRE employees in the conduct of domestic temporary duty travel.

5. Reporting Requirements. None.

6. Effect on Other Documents. This directive supersedes TRV-1, dated 8/25/87, all supplements thereto, and Temporary Directive 89-05, dated November 14, 1988, "Personal Telephone Calls on Official Travel".

7. References.

Federal Property Management Regulations (FPMR)
- 41 CFR 301 "Federal Travel Regulations - Travel Allowances."
- 41 CFR 101-38.3 "Official Use of Government Motor Vehicles."
- 41 CFR 101-41 "Transportation Documentation and Audit."

Department of the Interior Regulations
- 43 CFR 20.735-9 "Reimbursement of Travel and Related Expenses."
- 43 CFR 20.735-15 (b) "Misuse of Government Motor Vehicles or Aircraft."

Department of the Interior Manual
- 205 DM 15.0 "General Delegations - Travel and Transportation."
- 209 DM 7.1 "Delegations - Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management."

216 DM 2.1 "Delegations - Office of Surface Mining, General Administrative Delegation."
347 DM "Travel and Transportation of Employees"
350 DM 4 "Policy on Incidental/Dual-Function Pilots"

Civilian Personnel Law Manual - U.S. General Accounting Office.

Title III - Travel
Title IV - Relocation

Office of Surface Mining Directives System

OPM - 5 "Delegation of Authority"
ADS - 7 "Motor Vehicle Management"

Department of the Interior, Assistant Secretary - Policy, Budget and Administration Memorandum, July 12, 1988, "Change to Departmental Travel Mileage Limitation for Payment of Per Diem in the Vicinity of the Employee's Duty Station or Residence."

Department of the Interior Ethics and Conduct Information Bulletins

No. 82-2, February 17, 1982, "Acceptance of Transportation and Travel Related Expenses."
No. 88-3, December 1, 1988, "Acceptance of Expenses for Job Interviews."

Department of the Interior Financial Administration Memorandums (FAM)

No. 88-48, June 10, 1988, "Use of Government Telephones and Reimbursement for Use of Commercial Telephones While in Travel Status."
No. 88-89, September 21, 1988, "Changes to Departmental Travel Advance Policies and Procedures."

Federal Information Resources Management Regulations (FIRMR)

41 CFR 201-38 "Management of Telecommunications Resources"

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Bulletin

No. 88-17, July 22, 1988, "Limiting Travel Advances to Manage Cash More Effectively."

8. Effective Date. Upon issuance.

9. Contact. Chief, Division of Financial Management, (303) 236-0331, FTS 776-0331.

10. Key words. Travel, Temporary Duty, Per Diem, Transportation.

11. List of Appendices. Appendix 1, Domestic Temporary Duty Travel Policy and Procedures Handbook.

OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT

DOMESTIC TEMPORARY DUTY TRAVEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK

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PART 1. APPLICABILITY AND GENERAL RULES

1-1. Purpose. This handbook establishes the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) policies and procedures for official domestic temporary duty travel where latitude exists for Bureau administrative determination under the applicable laws and regulations. It also emphasizes some non-discretionary policies and rules which are particularly critical and require the special attention of managers and travelers.

These guidelines supplement those set forth in the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR), the Department of the Interior Manual (DM), and other official sources. The format of this handbook, and the subject matter assignment under the parts, is consistent with that of Chapter 1, Travel Allowances, Federal Travel Regulations. This scheme has been followed to facilitate review of the FTR guidance in conjunction with this handbook.

This OSMRE directive does not contain all the rules which regulate Government travel. Travelers and administrators of Government travel are cautioned that they must refer also to the other official sources (Federal Travel Regulations, Departmental Manual DM 347). For this purpose OSMRE offices have been furnished with a set of the Federal Travel Regulations and the Departmental Manual. As revisions to these guidelines are issued by the General Services Administration and the Department of the Interior, copies will be provided to all offices by the Division of Financial Management.

1-2. Definitions.

Official Duty Station. An employee's official station is the place at which he performs the major part of his duties and is expected to spend the greater part of his time. (B-182427, October 9, 1975).

Local and Vicinity Travel. Expenditures for local transportation of employees at their official duty station do not constitute travel expenses and are therefore properly chargeable as an administrative expense, rather than as a travel expense (24 Comp. Gen 858).

Residence. The place from which an employee commutes daily to work. (B-176650, February 28, 1973, et. al.).

1-3. Policy.

a. General. Official travel shall be limited to the minimum necessary for accomplishment of OSMRE's mission. All official travel must be authorized and approved by an official in whom authority is vested by statute or regulation or to whom such authority has been formally delegated.

When travel is required, the traveler must plan the trip carefully so that it is accomplished in the most economical and expeditious manner.

Officials authorizing travel are responsible for determining that the travel authorized is necessary to the conduct of Government business and that the expenses authorized do not exceed those which are legal and necessary.

The traveler is responsible for the following matters incidental to official travel:

- Obtaining advance authority for the complete itinerary involved and for complying with the regulations governing Government travel.

- Obtaining and submitting with the travel voucher, the necessary mileage records, receipts, and other items required to document the expenditure of Government funds for travel.

- Securing transportation in accordance with approved classes and rates.

- Accurately preparing and promptly submitting travel vouchers to support the expenditure of Government funds for travel. Vouchers should be submitted within 5 work days of the completion of travel. In the case of employees submitting monthly vouchers, they must be submitted within 5 work days after the end of the calendar month in which travel was completed.

- Promptly returning any funds advanced for travel which are not required for use in the immediate future.

- Providing security for tickets and Government Travel Requests (GTR's) against loss or theft, and for promptly reporting all losses to the Division of Financial Management.

- Reporting any outstanding travel advance on travel vouchers submitted for payment.

Travel will be conducted in strict accordance with the applicable Federal laws and regulations, including the Federal Travel Regulations, Departmental Manual and OSMRE Directives.

b. Authorization of Travel.

(1) Redelegation of the Director's Authority. The Director, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement has redelegated many of his travel authorities to various OSMRE officials. These redelegations are to be found in OSMRE Directive OPM-5 "Delegations of Authority". Authorities not specifically redelegated in the OPM-5 directive are not to be exercised by OSMRE officials.

Some of the authorities redelegated by OPM-5 are subject to redelegation again by the officials to whom they are delegated. These local redelegations must be documented in writing in local office directives or memorandums.

(2) Preparation of Travel Authorizations.

(a) Format. Travel authorizations will be documented by means of the OSMRE Travel Authorization form (Appendix 12). Amendments to approved travel authorizations will be documented with the OSMRE Travel Authorization Amendment form (Appendix 13).

(b) General (Unlimited Open) Travel Authorization. This type of authorization permits an individual to travel throughout the United States, its territorial possessions and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands as may be necessary, for any purpose except conference attendance, training, foreign travel, entitlement travel and relocation travel. This type of authorization is limited in OSMRE to the Director and the Deputy Directors.

(c) Area (Limited Open) Travel Authorization. This

type of authorization permits an individual to travel within a defined geographic area and for a specific purpose during the fiscal year without further authorization except for conference attendance, training, foreign travel, entitlement travel and relocation travel.

(d) Trip Travel Authorization. This type of authorization permits an individual to travel on a single trip to specified locations for specific purposes. Trip authorizations are required for all OSMRE employees traveling for the purpose of conference attendance, training, permanent change of station, foreign travel and entitlement travel. The authorization must clearly state the origin, destination(s) and the period of temporary duty.

(e) Required Statement of Trip Purpose. The Federal Travel Regulations require that the purpose of official travel be stated in the travel authorization. This will be accomplished in OSMRE by providing the appropriate two digit code from Appendix 1 to this directive. The selected code should be marked in the appropriate block of the travel authorization form.

(f) Requirement for Titles of Approving Officials. Since the authority for approving travel has been delegated to organizational positions, not to officials by name, it is required that the title of the signing official be provided whenever he/she exercises that authority. A person acting on behalf of the authorized official must provide the title of that official preceded by "Acting".

(g) Travel Cost Estimates. All travel authorizations shall include an estimate of the cost of the travel. These estimated cost figures will be established as obligations in the accounting system to comply with regulatory requirements and for improved budgetary control purposes.

For area and general travel authorizations, anticipated travel costs may be obligated for the entire year or may be obligated in periodic increments as the year progresses.

The original area or general travel authorization should include a cost estimate which represents the annual cost or the cost anticipated for the first period. Where the incremental obligation approach is selected, cost estimates for subsequent periods, e.g.,

quarter years, must be submitted utilizing the Travel Authorization Amendment form (Appendix 13).

c. Traveler's Responsibility for Transportation Tickets and Government Travel Requests (GTR's).

(1) Unused tickets and GTR's - Travelers are considered to have unused tickets when:

- Travel was not performed after the ticket was obtained.

- Travel was terminated short of the destination to which the transportation request was drawn or for which cash payment was made and the ticket issued.

- Services actually furnished were of less value or different character from those originally paid for or specified on the transportation request.

- The return portion of a round-trip ticket was not used.

Travelers are accountable for all transportation tickets, Government Transportation Requests (GTR's) or other transportation procurement documents received by them in connection with their official travel.

If trips are cancelled or itineraries changed after tickets are issued to the traveler, the traveler is liable for the value of the tickets issued until all ticket coupons have been used for official travel purposes or all unused tickets or coupons are properly accounted for on the travel voucher.

All unused tickets or partially unused tickets not returned to the carrier or travel agency for credit or exchange must be forwarded by the traveler to the office which processes his/her travel vouchers for payment.

When a carrier or travel agency is required to make a refund for a returned or exchanged ticket, the traveler should furnish the "bill charges to" address. For OSMRE, this address is:

Office of Surface Mining
P.O. Box 25065
Denver Federal Center
Denver, CO 80225

Unused tickets purchased with a Government employee's Diners Club charge card must be returned by the traveler to the carrier or travel agency that issued the ticket. The issuing carrier or travel agency will provide the traveler with a receipt and accomplish the credit with Diners Club.

(2) Lost or Stolen Common Carrier Ticket. Upon discovery of a missing common carrier ticket the traveler must immediately notify the nearest ticket office(s) of those carriers with which transportation has been scheduled. Should this notification to the carrier be within the time limits prescribed by the carrier, the traveler and OSMRE may be relieved of monetary liability for the cost of the lost tickets.

Although the initial notification may be by telephone, the traveler will be required by the carrier to fill out certain forms should the ticket not be recovered prior to purchasing a replacement ticket. The traveler will be required to purchase a replacement ticket for continuing the scheduled travel.

The traveler must provide written notice of the ticket loss with pertinent details (who, when, where, how, etc.) with his travel voucher. Failure of travelers to take timely notification action may subject them to liability for resulting monetary losses.

When there is an additional charge for reissuance of a lost ticket it will be paid by the Government unless the loss of the ticket is due to the gross negligence of the traveler to provide adequate security for the ticket in his/her possession. In cases of gross negligence, the traveler may be required to pay for the cost of ticket reissuance.

(3) Lost or Stolen GTR. When a GTR in the possession of a traveler or other accountable person is lost or stolen, a telephone notification should be made at once, followed immediately by written notification of such loss or theft, including a complete statement of the attendant circumstances, to the issuing administrative office and the Division of Financial Management.

If the GTR was filled out to the extent of showing the carrier and services desired from a designated point of origin, the person accountable for such request shall promptly furnish to the carrier as

well as other local initial carriers, specific information on the lost or stolen document, and request that it not be honored. Such advice should be confirmed in writing and a copy promptly transmitted to the issuing administrative office and the Division of Financial Management. Under no circumstance shall GTR's that have been reported lost or stolen be used subsequently to obtain transportation or accommodations if such documents are found or recovered. When found, these documents are to be marked "CANCELLED" and forwarded to the Division of Financial Management.

d. Travel Promotional Materials and Compensation for Denied Boarding. The Comptroller General has ruled that promotional materials, including compensation for denied boarding (e.g., bonus flights, reduced-fare coupons, cash, merchandise, gifts, credits toward free or reduced costs of services or goods, etc.), received by employees in connection with official travel and based on the purchase of a ticket or other services (e.g., car rental), are properly considered to be due the Government and may not be retained by the employee (see Comptroller General Decisions, B-212236, and B-210717, Appendix 2). When an employee receives such material, the employee will accept on behalf of the United States and relinquish it to the head of his office.

Coupons that provide for future free or reduced costs of services (travel) will be retained by the traveler's office and be applied to the maximum extent possible against future official travel.

Coupons that carry a cash surrender value shall be redeemed immediately by the traveler. The cash received from redeemed coupons or other cash compensation (i.e., denied boarding or cancellation of reservations by carriers, etc.) shall be surrendered to an OSMRE Collection Officer and sent to the Division of Financial Management for deposit in accordance with Department of Treasury requirements. All deposits will be credited to Miscellaneous Receipt Account No. 1699, "Miscellaneous Dividends and Earnings, Not Otherwise Classified."

Airlines are required to ask for volunteers to give up their reserved seats before the airline denies boarding to any passenger with a reservation. They are free to determine the amount to be paid to volunteers. Government employees voluntarily vacating a reserved seat may retain the payment received from the airline under the following conditions:

- Employees should not voluntarily give up their seats if it will interfere with the performance of official duties.

- If an employee voluntarily gives up his/her seat and, as a result, incurs additional travel expense beyond those which would have normally occurred, these additional expenses must be offset against the payment received by the employee.

- If the employee's travel is delayed during official duty hours, the employee would be charged annual leave for the additional hours.

Airline payments to volunteers are distinguishable from denied boarding compensation, wherein penalty payments are due the Government.

e. Weekend Return to Permanent Duty Station While on Long Term Temporary Duty. Employees are occasionally assigned to temporary duty which requires them to be in travel status for extended periods. When the cost of per diem at the temporary duty station during the non-duty (week-end) periods will exceed the cost of transportation to and from the employee's permanent duty station, the employee may be authorized to return to his or her permanent duty station at Government expense.

Additionally, even when the cost of transportation to and from the permanent duty station will exceed the cost of per diem at the temporary duty location, it is the policy of OSMRE to authorize return at Government expense to the permanent duty station for one weekend trip for each two full work weeks (80 hours) of duty at the temporary duty location.

A traveler also has the option of returning to his permanent duty station on weekends, even if the cost of transportation would exceed the cost of weekend per diem, if he is willing to pay the Government for the difference between the total transportation cost and the deferred per diem cost. Only those per diem costs which are actually deferred may be used to offset transportation costs. If lodging has been obtained on other than a daily basis and the charge will continue over the weekend, the cost of lodging cannot be used to offset transportation costs.

f. Travel for Pre-Appointment Interviews. Limited authority exists for the payment by the Government of travel costs for certain employment candidates for the purpose of job interviews to ascertain qualifications. (See Federal Personnel Manual, Chapter 571).

The categories of employees eligible for these travel expenses are:

- Competitive service positions at GS/GM-14 and above.

- Unique positions at GS/GM-13 and below characterized by an unusual combination of duties, responsibilities and qualification requirements.

- Certain Senior Executive Service positions.

- Positions for which the Department has determined there is a manpower shortage.

- Positions covered by direct hire authority issued or approved by OPM for shortage occupations.

The exercise of this authority is subject to prior approval by the Department of the Interior. All proposals to pay travel costs for pre-appointment interviews must be submitted to the Assistant Director, Budget and Administration, who, in consultation with the OSMRE Personnel Officer, will seek the required authorization from the Department.

g. Travel of Experts, Consultants and Private Parties Serving Without Compensation. The travel costs of private parties traveling on Government business may be paid by the Government. All such travel is subject to Federal Travel Regulation conditions and rates. The Deputy Director, Administration and Finance, will determine when it is appropriate for the Government to bear the expense of this travel. All authorizations of this type of travel will be documented by preparation of a standard travel authorization form, and are subject to that official's approval.

Private parties who are compensated for their services by means of a purchase order or contract normally include the cost of any incidental travel as part of their price quotation and secure reimbursement through submission of an invoice for the service rendered.

h. Reimbursement of Witnesses in Legal Proceeding for Travel and Per Diem Expenses. The authority for payment of the travel expenses of a witness, other than a Government employee testifying in his official capacity, attending in any court of the U.S., or before a U.S. magistrate, or before any person authorized to take his deposition pursuant to any rule or order of a court of the U.S., is contained in 28 U.S.C. 1821. The expenses authorized for reimbursement are:

- Attendance fee of $30.00 per day for each day in attendance and for each day of travel to and from the place of attendance.

- Actual transportation cost by common carrier not to exceed the most economical rate. The common carrier ticket should be purchased by the Government with a GTR.

- Privately owned vehicle mileage at the appropriate rate published in the current Federal Travel Regulations.

- Toll charges for toll roads, bridges, tunnels and ferries.

- Taxicab fares and parking fees (upon presentation of a valid parking receipt).

- Subsistence allowance not to exceed the maximum allowance for the geographical location which is prescribed by the Federal Travel Regulations. Lodging receipts must be submitted with the witness's claim.

The witness should be advised of his entitlement to reimbursement of costs associated with his attendance at court and assisted in preparing his claim. The claim need not be in any particular format but should clearly identify the cost items, be signed by the claimant and provide the mailing address for the reimbursement check. Parking and lodging receipts must accompany the claim when these costs are requested for reimbursement.

The witness's claim should be delivered to the administrative office of OSMRE which is knowledgeable of the circumstances of the court appearance. That office should forward the claim for payment to the Division of Financial Management with a completed "Public Voucher for

Fees and Mileage of Witnesses" (SF 1156) (Appendix 3) signed by the OSMRE official who has the authority to approve expenditure of funds from the account identified to fund the reimbursement.

i. Use of Travel Agencies. The use of travel agencies for obtaining domestic passenger transportation services for official Government travel is generally prohibited. The only exception is the use of travel agencies which have contracted with GSA to provide domestic travel services for Government agencies at certain locations.

Travel agencies other than those under GSA contract may be utilized only when the travel is:

- Within foreign countries (except Canada or Mexico)

- Between foreign countries

- From foreign countries to the United States and its possessions under certain conditions.

PART 2. TRANSPORTATION ALLOWABLE

2-1. Use of Government Vehicles. Government vehicles include those owned by OSMRE, obtained from a GSA motor pool or leased by the Government from a commercial source.

The only purpose for which a Government vehicle may be used is the accomplishment of official business. While an employee is in authorized travel status, official business may include transportation from the worksite to lodging and to obtain meals and other essentials such as laundry services.

Government vehicles may only be parked at an employee's residence when a cost savings to the Government can be demonstrated and such use is specifically authorized in writing by the official authorizing the employee's travel. The most common justifiable occasion for overnight parking at an employee's residence is when the employee will be traveling in official capacity to a work site which is closer to the employee's residence than to his/her office and it is not necessary for the employee to first report to the office.

Specifically prohibited is the use of a Government vehicle simply to provide transportation between the employee's domicile and permanent duty station unless such use is essential to the protection of life and property or is approved in advance by the Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary, Policy, Budget and Administration.

The minimum mandatory penalty for using or authorizing the use of a Government vehicle for other than official purposes is suspension from duty without compensation for thirty days. More specific information concerning the use of Government vehicles can be found in the Departmental Manual 205 DM 9.1, Federal Property Management Regulations 41 CFR 101-38.3, and Department of the Interior Regulations 43 CFR 20.735-15 (b).

2-2. Use of Rented Vehicles. OSMRE employees on short term temporary duty (TDY), assignments are no longer required to use the General Services Administration (GSA) Interagency Motor Pool System (IMPS) as the primary source for motor vehicles. Instead, the first sources for short term TDY travelers are the commercial sources listed in the Federal Travel Directory.

While not required to use the IMPS as the primary source, OSMRE TDY travelers may continue to do so when vehicles are available. The

IMPS will maintain current TDY service in those areas where there are no commercial contractors. The IMPS will continue to be the source of supply for long term (more than 30 days) TDY vehicle needs. The cost of vehicles rented from commercial sources while in travel status will not be charged directly to OSMRE. The traveler must pay for the rental and obtain reimbursement of the cost later through a travel voucher. Travel advances may include the estimated cost of rental vehicles when such use is authorized. The rental receipt must accompany the travel voucher when submitted. The use of rental vehicles must be specifically authorized by the travel authorizing official.

Commercial rental agencies usually require that the Government traveler show his/her travel authorization before allowing the GSA contract rate or foregoing the tax charges. GSA motor pools require that the Government traveler furnish a GSA Billed Office Address Code (BOAC) credit card or be able to furnish the BOAC number. The BOAC number should be available from the administrative services organization for each office.

The cost of collision damage waiver, collision damage or personal accident insurance is not reimbursable for travel within the United States, including Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico or U.S. territories and possessions.

Employees may be reimbursed for the cost of damage to rented vehicles up to the deductible amount contained in the rental contract if the damage occurs while the vehicle is being used for official business. Such costs may be claimed on the employee's travel voucher, with proof of payment and written explanation of the circumstances which caused the damage. Claims may alternatively be made on Form SF-1164 (Claim For Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business) when the cost is incurred in a local transportation situation where a travel voucher would not be filed.

When a rental company is willing to file its claim directly with OSMRE, instead of charging the employee, this is done by means of a tort claim.

2-3. Charter Transportation Services. Charter transportation services obtained from an air or bus commercial carrier shall be procured by means of a Government Transportation Request (GTR) and be

billed on a Public Voucher for Transportation of Passengers (SF-1171). If the charter service refuses to accept a GTR, a purchase order may be used. The terms of the charter must be reduced to writing and signed by the Government representative and the carrier representative. When possible, the terms should be shown on the reverse side of the GTR.

Charter air services contracted for by OSMRE will only be for aircraft certified by the Department of the Interior's Office of Aircraft Services (OAS). Contract aircraft must be flown only by pilots certified as qualified by OAS. For further information on these requirements consult the Department Manual, Parts 350 through 353, Aviation Management.

Two general categories are recognized for the use of aircraft chartered from a commercial source, or another Government agency, for official business:

a. Employee Official Travel. The cost of the charter is attributed to official travel when the purpose of the flight is to transport people from point to point and the aircraft does not depart from and return to the same point on the same day. All use of charter aircraft, whether obtained from a commercial or Government source, for official travel is subject to the prior approval of the Deputy Director, Administration and Finance. Such use of the charter aircraft will only be allowed when one or more of the following criteria apply:

- Charter service is the only air service available to the destination point and its use results in a cost saving to the Government when compared to ground travel.

- Scheduled airline service is available but so poorly timed in relation to travel requirements that a net cost saving would result from the use of charter aircraft.

- Emergency travel requirements to meet a deadline or commitment which could not be met by using a scheduled carrier.

- Use of charter aircraft is essential to the accomplishment of the travel's objective. An example is the need to make overflights of mining areas for programmatic purposes while in travel status.

b. Other Than Employee Official Travel. Charter aircraft use for normal official business, e.g., inspection overflights, taking place within a single work day, is not considered official travel and hence does not require special approval. Use of charter aircraft for other than employee official travel does not require prior approval of the Deputy Director, Administration and Finance.

PART 3. USE OF COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION

3-1. Discount Fares and Contract Airlines. Two sources of reduced air fares are available to Government travelers:

a. Discount Fares. Reduced rates are available for certain travelers, times, dates, routes, and airline companies. Discounts may be in the form of reduced ticket cost, cash rebates, coupons redeemable against future travel or other schemes for refunding value to the traveler. The Government traveler is responsible for obtaining fares at minimum cost considering all such rebates and for obtaining these coupons, gifts, and cash bonuses, when offered, and for surrendering them to the designated administrative official who will ensure that the benefit is realized by the Government.

Employees purchasing discount tickets, where there is a considerable potential saving to the Government, will not be liable for the cost of a nonrefundable fare if the travel had been authorized and if the trip cancellation resulted from circumstances beyond the control of the traveler.

b. Contract Airlines. The General Services Administration has contracted with various airlines to provide discount air transportation for Government employees when they are traveling between specified city pairs. OSMRE employees are required to seek out and utilize these contract airline services unless one or more of the below listed conditions exist.

- Space on any scheduled flight of the contract carrier is unavailable in sufficient time to accomplish the purpose of the travel.

- On the basis of a total cost comparison for the trip the use of another airline is less costly to the Government. Total costs should include items such as cost of travel from residence to airport, flight time (value of lost productive time), total per diem for the trip, airline fare, cost of travel from airport to hotel, etc.

- The scheduled flight of the contract carrier is not compatible with DOI's policies and practices regarding travel during scheduled work hours. (See Departmental Manual 370 DM 610 for DOI policy regarding travel outside of the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.)

PART 3. USE OF COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION

If a non-contract airline is used for official travel between city pairs where GSA contract airline service is available, the traveler must complete a justification form (Appendix 11). The justification must be approved by the travel authorizing official. The completed justification form must be submitted with the applicable travel voucher sent forward for payment.

3-2. Travel by Air Accommodations Exceeding Tourist Class. The use of air accommodations exceeding tourist class is prohibited except under the limited conditions and procedures covered in this section.

An authorization for use of air accommodations exceeding tourist class shall be obtained in advance of the travel unless extenuating circumstances or emergency situations make advance authorization impossible. In cases where authorization cannot be requested in advance, the employee must forward a written request for approval at the earliest possible time after the completion of travel and include copies of the travel authorization and travel voucher.

Requests for the use of air accommodations exceeding tourist class shall be prepared in the form of a memorandum from the employee through the Director, OSMRE and the Assistant Secretary, Lands and Minerals Management, to the Secretary of the Interior (See Appendix 4). Request memorandums will be submitted in triplicate to the Deputy Director, Administration and Finance, and shall contain the following information:

- Name, grade, and title of the traveler.

- Travel itinerary: dates, times, terminal points.

- Cost analysis: incurred cost versus next lower class cost.

Explanation of the circumstances which make use of air accommodations exceeding tourist class necessary. The only acceptable reasons are:

- Space is not available in tourist class accommodations on any scheduled flights at the time necessary to accomplish the purpose of the travel, which is so urgent that it cannot be postponed.

- Air accommodations exceeding tourist class are necessary because the employee is so handicapped or otherwise physically

impaired that tourist class accommodations cannot be used. Such condition must be substantiated by a statement from a competent medical authority.

- Air accommodations exceeding tourist class have been determined by the Secretary of the Interior to be essential to the successful performance of an agency mission.

- Tourist class accommodations on foreign carriers do not provide adequate sanitation or health standards.

- The use of air accommodations exceeding tourist class would result in an overall cost savings to the Government based on economic considerations.

NOTE: The situation where the airline, due to overbooking, seats the Government traveler in the first class section, but charges the fare for tourist class, does not require the approval of the Secretary.

PART 4. REIMBURSEMENT FOR THE USE OF PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLES

4-1. Use of Privately Owned Vehicles. The use of privately owned vehicles (POV) may be authorized for official purposes when it has been determined that common carrier transportation or Government-furnished conveyances are unavailable or their use interferes with the performance of official business. This determination is to be made by the official authorizing the travel and reflected as a specific approval of privately owned vehicle use in the travel authorization. Current reimbursement rates for the use of POV are:

- For use of a privately owned motorcycle: 20 cents per mile.
- For use of a privately owned automobile: 22.5 cents per mile.
- For use of a privately owned airplane: 45 cents per mile.

4-2. Employee Piloting of Privately Owned Aircraft on Official Business. An Incidental Pilot is any Government employee who acts as pilot-in-command of an aircraft while on official Government business and whose position description does not include specific pilot's duties. This circumstance arises when an employee with a pilot's license proposes to fly his/her own plane or one leased or rented by the Government to accomplish official business, transportation of self and others, surveillance flights, transportation of equipment and materials, etc.

Any Incidental Pilot performing duties as pilot-in-command on any Department mission must meet the minimum flying time and rating qualifications established by the DOI Office of Aircraft Services (OAS). Incidental Pilots must obtain a DOI Pilot Qualification Card prior to piloting any flights on official business. The card will be requested by means of a memorandum, setting forth the requestor's qualifications, forwarded to the Director, Office of Aircraft Services through the Director, OSMRE. All holders of DOI Pilot Qualification Cards will be flight checked annually by a designated OAS check pilot or FAA-GADO examiner, or semi-annually in the case of instrument rating. An incidental pilot must have a "Letter of Authorization" from the Director, OSMRE, which must be renewed annually.

More detailed information on these requirements can be found in the Departmental Manual 350 DM 4, "Policy on Incidental/Dual Function Pilots".

PART 4. REIMBURSEMENT FOR THE USE OF PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLES

4-3. Reimbursement for Transportation at the Permanent Duty Station. The cost of transportation at the permanent duty station location furnished by privately owned vehicle, rental vehicle, taxi or public transportation may be reimbursed, when such transportation is authorized by the supervisor, subject to the guidelines set forth below:

a. POV Mileage. Round trip mileage between the residence and the common carrier terminal will be allowed in connection with official travel, at the rate established in the FTR. When the POV is not parked at the common carrier terminal, round trip mileage will be allowed for the trip from the residence to terminal and for the trip from terminal back to residence. This mileage will be included for reimbursement on the travel voucher submitted for the associated official travel away from the permanent duty station.

Round trip mileage between the residence and the permanent duty station will be allowed on the day of travel for employees driving a POV to the permanent duty station to pick up a Government vehicle with which travel is accomplished overnight away from the permanent duty station.

POV mileage will be paid for travel to a temporary duty station at the permanent duty station location, when use of POV for this purpose is authorized by the supervisor. Since it is the employee's responsibility to furnish and bear the expense of transportation between his or her residence and the permanent duty station, the mileage allowance will be limited to one of the options below:

- When the employee is required to report to his/her permanent duty station, prior to traveling to the temporary duty station, mileage will be paid from the permanent duty station to the temporary duty station.

- When the employee is authorized to travel directly from his/her residence to the temporary duty station, mileage will be paid for the distance between residence and temporary duty station which exceeds the distance between residence and permanent duty station. When the distance between residence and temporary duty station is less than or equal to the distance between residence and permanent duty station, no mileage will be paid.

Since this transportation does not entail travel away from the permanent duty station location, reimbursement for these costs will be obtained by submittal of a "Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business" (SF-1164).

b. Parking. Parking fees will be allowed for a POV at the permanent duty station location in the following circumstances:

- At a temporary duty location at the permanent duty station, when the use of a POV has been authorized by the supervisor.

- When the employee leaves his POV at the permanent duty station location, picks up a Government owned vehicle and enters on official travel away from the permanent duty station.

- When the employee leaves his POV at a common carrier terminal and enters on official travel away from the permanent duty station.

Travelers will also be reimbursed for parking fees for Government owned vehicles and rental cars used on official business.

c. POV Cost Reimbursement Limitation. In authorizing use of a POV for transportation at the permanent duty station, and in determining the amount to be reimbursed, the cost of alternative transportation methods; bus, taxi, Government owned vehicle; should be considered. The determining factor should be achieving the minimum cost to the Government considering total cost (vehicle cost, cost of employee's time, etc.) When determining the amount of these costs to be reimbursed, they should be limited to the lowest cost of the feasible alternatives. For example, an employee may choose to drive his/her POV to the airport and leave it in a parking facility until return from official travel. If the cost of this arrangement exceeds the cost of taxis between residence and the terminal then reimbursement should be limited to what it would have been if he/she had utilized this more economical method. Circumstances other than employee preference may have dictated the use of the higher priced alternative and if this is the case it should be so noted on the travel voucher to avoid a reduction.

PART 5. BAGGAGE (RESERVED)

(This subject is adequately covered by the Federal Travel Regulations; no supplemental directions required.)

PART 6. COMMUNICATION SERVICES

6-1. Personal Telephone Calls on Official Travel. Government employees are now allowed reimbursement for personal telephone calls made while in official travel status. Official travel status includes permanent change of station travel as well as temporary duty travel. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 41, Chapter 201-38, "Management of Telecommunication Resources," and the Federal Travel Regulations 301-6.4, "Official Communications," provide the rules for such use of Government telephone systems. Additional guidance is to be found in memorandums issued by the General Services Administration (GSA) and the Department of the Interior (DOI).

Government travelers are allowed to make the following kinds of personal calls at Government expense while in official status:

o Calls to notify affected persons of travel schedule revisions which will cause a change in the time of return.

o One brief daily call, back to the area code of the residence location, from temporary duty locations within the 50 United States and the District of Columbia.

o One brief call every third day of travel from temporary duty locations outside the 50 United States and the District of Columbia.

The Federal Telecommunications System (FTS), or Government provided long distance telephone service, should be used for these calls. Other arrangements; hotel telephone, personal charge cards, charges back to the residence phone, and pay phones (only in emergency or as a last resort), may be utilized when the Government networks are not available.

Reimbursement will be allowed for qualifying personal calls when a telephone charge card supplied by the Government is not available, and the calls are not charged directly to the Government, but are paid for originally by the traveler, subject to the following conditions:

o Toll calls charged against the lodging bill. Calls must be identified as a separate charge on the lodging receipt submitted with

the travel voucher. The phone number called and the estimated duration of the phone call should be included on the travel voucher.

o Toll calls from telephones paid by deposit of coins. A statement must be provided on the travel voucher that calls were made from a coin-operated telephone and no receipt is available.

o Toll calls charged against the traveller's residential telephone account or a personal charge card. The reimbursement claims must be accompanied by a copy of the applicable monthly billing statement. In order to avoid delay of voucher submission and because a monthly billing statement may not be available at that time, all personal calls charged to the traveler's residential telephone account or credit card may be reimbursed by submitting a form SF-1164, "Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business" or a travel voucher submitted after the billing statement becomes available.

o Charges for telephone calls must be supported by a statement on the reimbursement claim which shows the points between which service was rendered, the date, and the amount paid for each call.

It will be the responsibility of the official approving the travel voucher to make the determination that personal calls claimed for reimbursement are proper for payment with Government funds. The signature of the approving official on the travel voucher will serve as approval for all telephone calls claimed. No further certification or approval will be required unless requested by the voucher examiner or certifying officer.

Managers should apply the following guidelines when reviewing claims:

o To qualify for personal calls, the traveler must be in travel status for more than one business day.

o Calls should be of short duration; the maximum amount allowed for a single call is $5.00.

o A call of longer duration may be allowed if it represents the summation of two or more days entitlement. For example, an employee may incur a cost of $15.00 for a single call if it is made in lieu of 3 calls to which he would otherwise be entitled.

o Only calls between the traveler's temporary duty location and the area code/prefix of the traveler's residence will be allowed, unless there is a documented explanation provided, e.g., call to a spouse who is also in travel status.

o Normally only calls initiated by the traveler will be allowed. However, calls originating from the traveler's permanent residence location may be reimbursed, in emergency cases. The circumstances must be documented in the reimbursement claim.

o In emergency situations, more than one call per day, and calls costing more than $5.00, may be approved. The circumstances of the emergency must be documented in the reimbursement claim.

o Receipts should be furnished to support costs claimed for reimbursement (hotel/motel bills, etc.). Where receipts are not available (e.g., coin-operated telephones) the reason must also be documented in the reimbursement claim.

PART 7. PER DIEM ALLOWANCES

7-1. Subsistence Payments for Extended Training Assignments. When an employee is assigned to training at a temporary duty station which will extend beyond 30 calendar days, the subsistence rate, applicable from the beginning of the assignment, will be established in accordance with one of the criteria below:

- Subsistence (meals, lodging and incidental expenses) allowance set at 55 percent of the applicable per diem rate established in the Federal Travel Regulations.

- Actual subsistence expenses. Any payment of actual expenses exceeding 55 percent of the FTR per diem rate must be supported by documentation of the circumstances (e.g., unavailability of acceptable lower cost lodging) and must be approved by the Department of the Interior Office of Financial Management. Payment of actual subsistence expenses may not exceed the applicable full per diem rate specified by the FTR.

The subsistence payment method selected from the above options must be documented in the travel authorization. These procedures are in conformance with the requirements of the Office of Personnel Management Regulations, 5 CFR 410.603 and Departmental Manual 370 DM 410, 6.2.

7-2. Special Per Diem Provision for Extended Temporary Duty Other Than Training. When an employee is assigned to a temporary duty location for a period of time in excess of 60 days, consideration should be given to establishing a reduced rate for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE). The reduced rate would be in consideration of the employee's securing lodging with housekeeping facilities where meals could be prepared at a lower price than is obtainable from restaurants. The lower rate should be negotiated by the official authorizing the travel and should be effective the date that occupancy of lodging with housekeeping facilities commenced. The reduced rate should be expressed as a flat M&IE rate and cited in the travel authorization.

7-3. Lodging Away from the Temporary Duty Station Location. Employees in travel status who are required to stay overnight are expected to obtain lodging at the temporary duty station designated in their travel authorization. However, if an employee obtains lodging away from the temporary duty station because of personal

preference, the allowable per diem rate for lodging shall be limited to that prescribed for the temporary duty location.

Travelers having an itinerary requiring multiple temporary duty locations, who are unable to reach their next temporary duty station during the business day, and who decide to stop for lodging at an intermediate point, shall be reimbursed at the per diem rate for the stopover point.

7-4. Government Purchase of Lodging and/or Meals. Unless it can be shown that a significant cost saving can be realized by procuring lodging and/or meals with a Government purchase order, hotel and motel accommodations will be obtained by each Government traveler individually, with reimbursement of costs through submission of a travel voucher. In those instances when a purchase order is used to obtain lodging and/or meals, the voucher audit copy of the purchase order which is forwarded to the Division of Financial Management must be accompanied by the names of the OSMRE employees, and/or persons on invitational travel, to be provided lodging and/or meals. The purchase order itemization must be specific enough to preclude the provision of unauthorized services by the vendor. The vendor must be instructed to prepare an invoice in such a manner that it can be determined exactly what was charged for lodging and meals and support services. (Support services include such charges as those for meeting rooms, audiovisual equipment, etc.)

The vendor's invoice must be supported by a list of the individuals provided lodging and meals under the purchase order, a description of how meals were provided within the M & I E rate or a copy of itemized meal charges demonstrating they are within the M & I E rate, and an official statement of the room rate.

The purchase order will be audited under the same rules which regulate the travel of Government employees which is reimbursed through travel vouchers. The maximum amount which can be reimbursed to the traveler and/or paid to the vendor cannot exceed the per diem rate authorized for the location of the hotel and motel. The responsible program office will retain the vendor support documents for audit purposes.

All persons provided with meals and/or lodging under a Government purchase order must be traveling on official business authorized by a written travel authorization. If no other travel expenses for the

particular trip will be claimed by employees through submission of a travel voucher, a single travel authorization can be prepared for all the participants which will be supported by a list of all individuals covered by that authorization. The travel of each participant who will submit a travel voucher, however, must be authorized on a separate travel authorization.

Where individual meals are provided at nominal or no cost, either directly or indirectly by a Federal agency, per diem will be reduced. However, in no instance should the amount paid to the employee be reduced to the point where the employee would receive less than the daily incidental expense allowance of $2.00. The M & I E allowance will not be reduced for meals provided on common carriers or for complimentary meals made available by the provider of lodging accommodations. The FTR's provide the following breakdown for the M & I E allowance portion of the per diem rate:

M & I E Rate	$26	$34
Breakfast	$ 5	$ 7
Lunch	5	7
Dinner	14	18
Incidentals	2	2

For each meal provided at Government expense, but without charge to the traveler, the M & I E rate will be decreased by the appropriate amount shown in this table.

7-5. Commuting to a Temporary Duty Location from Residence. The Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) state that: "It is the responsibility of each department and agency to authorize only such per diem allowances as are justified by the circumstances affecting the travel." (FTR 301-7.3(a))

The Comptroller General's decisions have long held that per diem is not a statutory right and that it is within the discretion of the agency to pay per diem only to the extent it is necessary to cover the increase expenses arising from the performance of official duty (55 Comp. Gen. 1323 (1976); 31 Comp. Gen. 264 (1952); B-211244, September 27, 1983).

Accordingly, when an employee is commuting daily from his/her residence to a temporary duty location, ordinary expenses normally incurred at the residence location, e.g., meals, will not be reimbursed. In order to be reimbursed for expenses incurred while at the residence location, employees must show that the expenses are required because of the temporary duty assignment and that they are real expenses above and beyond those normally incurred by an employee living and working at a permanent duty station.

For the purpose of implementing these guidelines, the employee's residence will be assumed to be the place from which the employee commutes daily to work. This residence identification is that which must be provided by the traveler in Block 1f. of the Travel Voucher (SF-1012).

In summary, the cost of lodging, meals and incidental expenses will not be reimbursed when incurred at either the permanent duty station or residence locations.

7-6. Time and Distance Limitations on Per Diem Payments. When an employee is on a regular tour of duty and is in travel status less than 24 hours, but more than 10 hours, and lodging is not required, the employee may receive a per diem payment. This applies regardless of the time travel begins or ends.

Per diem shall not be allowed; however, for employees who qualify under the 10-hour rule solely because they work a non-standard workday; e.g. four 10-hour days or other compressed or flexible schedule. In such instances, per diem will only be allowed if the period of travel is more than the employee's workday hours plus 2 hours.

Under normal duty situations, excluding conference or training travel, a per diem allowance may not be paid if the temporary duty station is 50 miles or less from the official permanent duty station or the employee's residence from which he commutes daily to work at his permanent duty station. Exceptions to this limitation may be approved when the travel involves unusual and/or uncontrollable factors such that requiring the employee to return to his/her residence each day would create an undue hardship. These might include such circumstances as the requirement for extremely late meeting sessions, bad weather, unavailability of transportation, or any number of other contingencies.

Requests for approval of per diem payment in the circumstances described above, may be approved by the Director when the distance from temporary duty to employee's permanent duty station or residence is less than 50 miles but more than 30 miles. The request must be in writing and should adequately describe the circumstances warranting approval of the exception. The Director's authority to approve these exceptions may not be redelegated.

For conference or training travel, the limitations on per diem payment applies to temporary duty within 30 miles of the employee's permanent duty station or residence.

For all travel purposes, requests for exceptions to the 30 mile limitation on per diem payment must be submitted in writing to the Assistant Secretary - Policy, Budget, and Administration. These requests must be submitted through the Deputy Director.

There is a single situation for which no approval is required to pay per diem within 30 miles of employee's residence or permanent duty station. This circumstance arises in the case of training provided by a private contractor not under the control of OSMRE, or another Federal agency, when attendees are required to lodge at the training site as a condition of receiving the training.

In addition to obtaining approval for payment of per diem within the mileage limitations described above, the traveler must be in an authorized travel status and actually incur costs that qualify for reimbursement.

7-7. Lodging Tax Exemptions. The per diem rates established by GSA for official Government travel include provision for the payment of State and local taxes on lodging (Federal Travel Regulations, 301-7.1(c)). When a Federal employee rents a room directly from the proprietor, he/she becomes personally liable for the amount of the rental, including tax. The Government is not a party to the transaction and the tax is therefore not a tax on the Government. Accordingly, the employee must pay the tax and cannot assert the Government's immunity from local taxes. The fact that the Government may reimburse the full rental price as part of the employee's travel expense does not transform the tax into a tax on the Government (55 Comp. Gen. 1278 (1976). If local law exempts Federal employees from the tax, the employees should use tax exemption certificates to claim the exemption.

Some State and local taxing authorities, recognizing that for Federal travelers the payment of taxes represents a pass through of costs which will ultimately be paid by expenditure of Federal funds, have exempted Federal travelers from payment. The General Services Administration (GSA) publication, "Federal Travel Directory", issued monthly, provides a listing of the municipalities and States which exempt Federal travelers from local tax payment.

PART 8. REIMBURSEMENT OF ACTUAL SUBSISTENCE EXPENSES

8-1. Authorization of Actual Expenses in Unusual Circumstances Where the FTR Per Diem Allowance is Insufficient. The Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) provide for authorization of travel on an actual reimbursement basis where it has been established that the applicable maximum per diem rate is inadequate due to special or unusual circumstances.

The following procedures for requesting rates higher than those established in the FTR address two different circumstances which are encountered by travelers:

a. Situation where the cost of all acceptable lodging in the area exceeds the FTR allowance. The proposing office will conduct a survey of acceptable lodging establishments in the travel location (see localities listed in Appendix 1-A to Chapter 1 of the FTR) to determine the average lodging cost.

If the average actual lodging cost exceeds by 10% the maximum lodging reimbursement rate for the area, the proposing office may request authorization of travel on an actual reimbursement basis with the maximum rate not to exceed 150% of the per diem rate established in the FTR for the area. The required special rate is to be determined by adding the average lodging cost determined by survey to the meal and incidental expense (M&IE) rate established by the FTR. The example below demonstrates determination of a special rate proposal:

Location: Tulsa, Oklahoma, FTR rate = $71.00 per day

Motel Survey:	
Motel A:	$48.00/day
Motel B:	$55.00/day
Motel C:	$60.00/day
Total:	$163.00
Average Lodging:	54.33
FTR Lodging Rate:	45.00
Average/FTR:	121%

Actual lodging cost exceeds 10% or FTR rate so a higher rate may be requested.

Proposed subsistence reimbursement rate:

Actual average lodging:	$54.33
FTR M&IE rate:	26.00
Total:	$80.33

Approved special rates will not be established for an indefinite period. They will be approved for the anticipated period of requirement, e.g., tourist season, special event, etc. In no case will they be approved for more than one year. If the need still exists beyond the initial year period, another survey will be conducted and a new proposal will be submitted for approval.

The approving authority will be the Deputy Director, Administration and Finance. Proposals will be submitted in the format of the attached sample request (Appendix 5). Requests for Headquarters personnel should be routed through the Assistant Director, Budget and Administration. Those for field personnel should be routed through the appropriate Assistant Director, Field Operations.

Once the temporary high rate has been approved, the rate will be applicable to actual reimbursement travel authorizations issued under local approval authority.

b. Situation where lodging and/or meals can be obtained in the travel area within the FTR allowances but circumstances necessitate obtaining lodging and/or meals at a higher cost. The FTR allow for the establishment of higher per diem allowances in the following circumstances:

- Where arrangements have been made by others than the employee for a meeting or conference whereby attendants are required to lodge and/or take their meals at a specific facility and the price exceeds the FTR allowance.

- Subsistence costs at the travel location have escalated for short periods of time due to special functions or events.

- The conduct of official business requires an expenditure for meals and/or lodging which exceeds the FTR allowance.

The traveler will request authorization of a higher allowance before traveling, if possible. Where it is not possible to secure advance approval on the travel authorization, the higher rate can be approved on the travel voucher. The request for the higher rate must set forth circumstances which make the special rate necessary in sufficient detail for the authorizing official to make a determination.

The higher rate approved, documented in the travel authorization or on the travel voucher, must be expressed as a separate rate for lodging and for meals. The separate rates for each category, lodging and meals, will not exceed 150% of the rates established in the FTR. For example, special rates for Washington, D.C., where the FTR rates are $87 for lodging and $34 for meals, will not exceed $130.50 for lodging and $51.00 for meals.

The approving authority for this category of special rates will be the Assistant Director for the traveler's organization. The approval will consist of either signing the travel authorization which establishes the higher rate, in advance of travel, or signing the travel voucher which post-approves the higher rate.

c. Travel Vouchers for Special Rates. When a special rate for M & I E has been approved in excess of that set in the FTR, the travel voucher will be prepared on an actual reimbursement basis, i.e., individual meals will be separately claimed at actual cost. Itemization is not required when the special rate affects only the lodging rate.

PART 9. MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES (RESERVED)

(This subject is adequately covered by the Federal Travel Regulations; no supplemental directions required.)

PART 10. SOURCES OF FUNDS

10-1. Travel Advances.

a. General. The purpose of making travel advances is to eliminate the need for travelers to use their own funds for most costs of official travel.

Under normal conditions travelers are expected to obtain their travel advances by means of Treasury check. Payment of advances from the imprest fund should be limited to emergency situations where circumstances will not allow for sufficient lead time to obtain the advance by Treasury check. Travelers should make arrangements to request travel advances by Treasury check at least three weeks in advance of the beginning of a trip. Travel advances up to a maximum of $150 may be paid from the imprest fund. This limit may be exceeded in the case of emergencies when a justification is provided for the reimbursement voucher by the Field Office Director or equivalent authority.

b. Format. Travel advances will be requested and authorized utilizing the OSMRE Application and Account for Advance of Funds form (Appendix 14).

c. Limitations on Travel Advances. Generally, travel advances will be granted on a trip-by-trip basis, although continuing "rollover" advances may be allowed for employees in continual travel status (e.g., in travel status at least 50% of the work time over a period of 3 successive months). Continuing advances will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Division of Financial Management (DFM). If the advance exceeds the out-of-pocket expenses for a 45-day period, the advance will be reduced by either a deduction from a travel voucher or repayment from the employee.

Travelers should not submit requests for travel advances if they are delinquent in repaying previous advances. Subsequent travel advances will not be allowed for employees with delinquent outstanding travel advances. (For definition of delinquent travel advances see e. below).

The traveler is responsible for limiting the request for travel advance to the minimum level necessary for official travel. The travel approving official must monitor travel advance requests to ensure that the amount requested does not exceed the allowable minimum.

Those employees determined to be eligible to secure the Government charge card from Diners Club will be limited to an advance amount equal to those anticipated costs not customarily appropriate for charge card payment. Domestic travel costs eligible to be covered by a travel advance include the meal and incidental expense allowance for the travel location tolls, parking fees, taxi fares, and any other expenses not normally charged against the Government charge card. Expenses not eligible to be covered by a travel advance, for employees eligible to secure the Government charge card or for employees who have lost charge card privileges because of non-payment of previous charges, include the cost of lodging, car rental and any other expenses appropriate for payment with a charge card. When travel is to an area where charge cards are not acceptable as a method of payment, an advance equal to the full amount of the per diem and other authorized expenses may be granted.

Employees who are not eligible for the Government charge card may be advanced the full amount authorized for reimbursement by the Federal Travel Regulations.

Advances for extended temporary duty travel and for permanent change of station (PCS) travel will be limited to the funds needed for no more than 30 days. In cases of financial hardship, as determined by the official approving the advance, advances may be made to cover expenses for up to 45 days.

d. Diners Club Government Charge Card. The Diners Club Government charge card will be made available to all OSMRE employees expected to travel at least twice during the fiscal year (frequent travelers). This determination will be made by the official who authorizes the employee's travel and will be documented by an approval signature on the form which must accompany each application for a charge card (See Appendix 6).

e. Time Frame for Repayment of Travel Advances. Outstanding travel advances for temporary duty travel will be considered delinquent unless repaid or offset by a travel voucher submitted to the approving official within 5 working days of the return of the traveler to his/her duty station.

f. Recovery of Delinquent Travel Advances. The traveler is required to repay any unused travel advance balance at the time the travel reimbursement claim is filed. When a reimbursement voucher is

not received within 30 days from the end of the authorized travel period or is insufficient to settle the outstanding balance, the traveler will be requested to settle the advance immediately. The traveler will also be advised that a payroll deduction will be initiated for the outstanding balance unless settlement is received within 15 days.

The Administrative Service Centers (ASC) which process travel vouchers for payment will be responsible for recovering advances through application of travel voucher reimbursement payments and are also responsible for initiating recovery of delinquent travel advances by other available means. This recovery action will start with the issuance of a reminder letter notifying the traveler of the outstanding travel advance delinquency and requesting payment by check or submission of a travel voucher (See Appendix 7). If the traveler fails to respond to this notice, the ASC will refer the debt to the Division of Financial Management for formal debt collection action by preparing the forwarding a Debt Referral Report to DFM (See Appendix 8).

DFM will serve due notice on the delinquent traveler; and, if there is no response, the amount owed may be withheld from the traveler's pay along with appropriate charges for interest, penalty, and administrative costs. Payroll deduction against salary will be made at the rate of 15% of disposable salary until the entire amount of the advance has been recovered (See Appendix 9 for the general conditions applicable to recoveries under the Debt Collection Act). The employee may halt this process before it begins or at any time during the payroll deduction period by submitting a check for the entire balance due, by submitting a travel voucher to cover the indebtedness, by proposing an acceptable alternative means to make repayment, or by filing a request for waiver of repayment. The waiver request should be prepared in the form of a memorandum setting forth the particulars of the situation and providing the reasons why the waiver should be granted.

Once each fiscal year, at year end, Aged Travel Advance Detail reports will be provided for each traveler with an outstanding advance balance. The traveler is requested to review this report and certify its accuracy by signing the statement on the report and returning a report copy to the Administrative Service Center or the Assistant Director, Budget and Administration for forwarding to DFM.

Travelers are responsible for maintaining their own records of travel advance transactions; advances received and repayments made by travel voucher offsets, personal check or payroll deductions. If the traveler does not agree with the outstanding advance balance shown on the report, he/she will be asked to identify the specific transaction(s) on the report which resulted in the alleged erroneous balance. The transactions will be reviewed by DFM to determine the correct balance which will then be presented for the traveler's certification.

The travel approving official is responsible for actively supporting efforts to recover delinquent advances from subordinates. To ensure that supervisors are aware of employees with delinquent travel advances, a copy of the initial travel advance delinquency notice will be sent to the traveler's office by the appropriate ASC. Field Office Directors and Headquarters and EFO/WFO Division Chiefs will be provided with a monthly Aged Travel Advance Report from ABACIS. this report lists all outstanding travel advances for an individual and reports the length of time since the advance was paid. It is expected that supervisors will discuss the delinquency with the traveler and encourage repayment to forestall debt collection action (recovery from pay).

g. Requests for "Rollover" Travel Advances and Exceptions to Travel Advance Payment and Recovery Procedures. "Rollover" advances and exceptions to the established limitations and procedures may be approved on an individual basis by the Deputy Director. Requests should be in the form of a memorandum, or, in the case of an emergency, by telephone call followed up by a memorandum. Requests for Headquarters personnel should be routed through the Assistant Director, Budget and Administration. Those for field personnel should be routed through the appropriate Assistant Director, Field Operations.

10-2. Acceptance of Transportation and Travel-Related Expense Paid by Private Parties. The Departmental regulations state in Part 20.735-4, "Employee Responsibilities and Conduct," that "Except as specifically authorized by law, when an employee is on official duty (no leave status) all travel and accommodations shall be at Government expense and his or her acceptance of outside reimbursement for travel expenses or services in kind from private sources, either in his or her behalf or in behalf of the Government, is not allowed (18 U.S.C. 209). This includes instances where an employee is

officially directed to participate in a convention, seminar, or similar meeting sponsored by a private source for the mutual interest of the Government and the private source. In such instances, expenses shall be charged to the appropriate bureau or Department appropriation." Exceptions to this policy may only be approved on a case by case basis by the Deputy Director, Administration and Finance.

Before an employee is permitted to take or accept transportation and related travel expenses in connection with a job interview from a potential employer in the private sector who has business dealings with the Department of the Interior, the employee's immediate supervisor and the OSMRE Deputy Ethics Counselor (Assistant Director, Budget and Administration) must ensure that:

o The employee has filed a disqualification statement if it is required by the employer under 43 CFR Section 20.735-13(b).

o The employee has provided documented evidence that the trip is for a bona fide job interview, and that the potential employer offers the transportation and related travel expenses to all similarly situated applicants, not only those employed within the Department of the Interior.

This travel acceptance regulation covers payments-in-kind and extends to cash reimbursements only when a documented accounting of the expenses and the reimbursement is submitted to the Deputy Ethics Counselor.

The above requirements do not apply to employees negotiating for future employment with a potential employer who has no business with, and is not seeking business with, the Department, is not regulated by the Department and cannot be affected by the performance or nonperformance of the employee's duties.

10-3. Prohibition on Use of Personal Funds to Purchase Transportation Costing $100 or More. The Department requires that common carrier tickets costing $100 or more be purchased through use of a Government Transportation Request (GTR) or through a Government Travel System (GTS) account. The only exception to this requirement is that charge cards issued to Federal employees under the Government contract with Diners Club, Inc., may be used to purchase passenger

transportation services in any amount. No other credit or charge cards may be used to purchase transportation services exceeding $100 in connection with official travel. Employees should not use cash from personal or travel advance funds to purchase tickets of $100 or more except in emergency circumstances. Emergency circumstances are limited to those situations where an employee must travel and cannot purchase a ticket with a GTR or through the Government Travel Service (GTS) arrangement with travel agencies under GSA contract. Transportation for a spouse's house hunting trip and a spouse and family relocation trip must also be purchased with a GTR, through the GTS arrangement, or with a charge card issued under the Government contract with Diners Club, Inc.

In instances where personal funds exceeding $100 are used to purchase transportation, reimbursement of the cost of transportation purchased requires approval by the Deputy Director, Administration and Finance. Failure to obtain the required written approval makes the employee liable for all costs exceeding $100.

Requests for approval should be in the form of a memorandum from the employee to the Deputy Director (See Appendix 10). Request memorandums, including a copy of the travel authorization, shall contain the following information:

- Name and position or title of the employee.

- Explanation of the emergency circumstances justifying the use of cash instead of a U.S. Government Transportation Request (SF 1169), GTS arrangement, or Government charge card, to purchase transportation costing $500 or more.

- Name and address of the person to whom the request for approval is to be returned after action by the Deputy Director.

When a ticket is purchased by means other than a GTR, or GTS arrangement, the traveler shall assign to the Government the right to recover any excess payments involving carrier's use of improper rates. The assignment is pre-printed on the travel voucher form and shall be initialed by the traveler.

10-4. <u>Prohibition on Use of Government Funds to Purchase Indirect Travel Tickets</u>. A Government Travel Request (GTR) will not be used, nor will costs be charged against a Government Travel Service (GTS)

corporate account for personal transportation services or privileges which increase or exceed the cost of those authorized. When an indirect route is utilized for the personal convenience of the traveler, the additional cost, including the applicable share of the Federal transportation tax, shall be at the personal expense of the traveler and paid to the carrier or Travel Management Center (TMC) at the time of ticket purchase. The Government must not be charged for these incremental travel costs even though the traveler has every intention of reimbursing the Government for these expenses later.

PART 11. CLAIMS FOR REIMBURSEMENT

11-1. Preparation, Audit and Payment of Travel Vouchers.

a. Requirement for Use of the Authorized Travel Voucher Form. The FTR's require that all claims for reimbursement of costs incurred in travel away from the permanent duty station be submitted only on the authorized travel voucher form (SF-1012) (See Appendix 15). Reimbursement claims for local transportation costs at the permanent duty station should be claimed on the "Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business" form (SF-1164).

Computer printout reimbursement claims, prepared by such programs as "Travel Lightning" will be accepted when accompanied by a properly endorsed front page of the SF-1012 form.

Reimbursement for local travel costs (and other local expenditure claims) may be included on a travel voucher with reimbursement claimed for travel away from the permanent duty station. In this case, the local reimbursement items shall be listed separately from the travel claim items.

b. Voucher Copy of the Travel Authorization. A copy of the travel authorization must be available to the voucher examiner at the time the travel voucher is audited to verify that the costs claimed were duly authorized. This is accomplished, in the case of trip travel authorizations, by submitting the voucher copy of the authorization with the travel voucher. For travel approved under an area travel authorization, the voucher copy of the authorization must be submitted with the first travel voucher filed. Subsequent area travel vouchers must be accompanied by a machine copy of the travel authorization.

c. Approval of Travel Vouchers. Vouchers for reimbursement of expenses for travel performed under a travel authorization must be administratively approved by officials designated in OSMRE Directive OPM-5 "Delegation of Authority." The administrative approval is not intended to confirm the eligibility of the expense items claimed by the traveler but only to confirm the official necessity for the travel, the fact that the travel did occur and that the items claimed for reimbursement are within the scope of those intended to be authorized.

When cost items proper for payment under the Federal Travel Regulations are included on an approved travel voucher, they will be