

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT DIVISION



TRAVEL TIDBITS

“ONE APHIS - - SHARING INFORMATION”

MAY 2003

The Financial Management Division (FMD) is resuming the monthly issuance of the “Travel Tidbits”. This is the premiere issue and will be issued on a monthly basis as needed. The travel Tidbits will be emailed to program/unit travel contacts and is also available online at www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/travel.html. Travel Tidbits are designed to provide Agency personnel with the current policies and procedures relating to federal travel and transportation practices. The information provided is obtained from Comptroller General (CG) Decisions, GSA Board of Contract Appeals (GSBCA) Decisions, Federal Travel Regulations (FTR), as well as, internal Departmental and Agency policies. This publication is to be used as a tool to assist with the interpretation of travel regulations and to provide instructions of travel processes.

I. MAY MY AGENCY USE APPROPRIATED FUNDS FOR THE PURCHASE OF “LIGHT REFRESHMENTS AT AN OFFICIAL CONFERENCE...MEETING, RETREAT, SEMINAR, SYMPOSIUM, OR EVENT.”

The General Services Administration (GSA) amended the Federal Travel Regulations regarding conference planning on January 10, 2000. As part of this amendment, GSA authorized Agencies, at their discretion, to provide light refreshments to agency employees attending official conferences (41 CFR Part 301-74.11). GSA permitted Agencies to use appropriated funds to pay for the refreshments as long as some of the conference attendees were on per diem.

On January 27, 2003, the Comptroller General issued Decision B-288266 stating that appropriated funds are **not** available for the purchase of light

refreshments at official conferences. This Comptroller General Decision supersedes Part 301-74-11 of the Federal Travel Regulations.

Effective January 27, 2003, light refreshments for attendees at an official conference or event may only be purchased with personal funds, appropriated funds may no longer be used for this expense. If appropriated funds were used to purchase light refreshments for this purpose between January 10, 2000 and January 27, 2003, no reimbursement to the appropriation is necessary.

II. APPROVAL OF AD-202'S PRIOR TO TRAVEL

This is to remind all employees and approving officials of Agency Policy requiring that:

All travel (except for local travel) to be performed on behalf of the Agency and/or paid with Agency funds including another government agency or funds received from an approved outside source, must be approved on an AD-202 prior to the start of travel, except for emergency situations. In emergency situations, considered to be less than 2 work days notice, the AD-202 should be hand carried for approval, if practical.

No tickets should be released to an employee until the AD-202 is approved, except for emergency situations as identified above.

3. Each employee is responsible for ensuring that an AD-202 is approved prior to departing on official travel.

If time does not permit approval prior to the start of travel, a justification must be submitted for the post approval of the AD-202.

III. CHANGE OF OFFICIAL ITINERARY FOR PERSONAL REASONS

Employees who are authorized to conduct official business are authorized to depart from their official duty station and to arrive at the *official* location identified on the approved Form AD-202, travel authorization form, only. Employees who choose to deviate from the official itinerary for personal reasons may do so, however, they may not be authorized the use of a government fare to or from unofficial departure or arrival points. A commercial fare must be purchased for all unofficial points (destinations not authorized on the AD-202) at the employee's expense.

General:

When an employee combines personal travel with official travel, reimbursement for transportation is limited to the actual cost of transportation or the constructive cost of direct travel, whichever is lesser. Employees who exchange Government contract fares to the TDY point for a restricted or non-restricted supersaver fare for the purpose of scheduling personal travel in conjunction with official travel, must incur all penalties if the trip is canceled for business or personal reasons. If the official travel is canceled, the employee is responsible for reimbursing the Agency for the full amount paid by the Government, including any penalties incurred.

a. PREPARATION AND APPROVAL

When preparing the AD-202, only the official days of authorized travel are to be shown in item 9., Estimated Dates of Travel Expenses. Do not include any periods of annual leave taken before or after official travel. An individual (Type C) Single (S) authorization must be prepared for each trip when annual leave is taken in conjunction with official travel or when there is a deviation from the normal mode of transportation or the official itinerary for personal convenience. An MRP Form 10-R, Request for Special Travel, and a leave slip (when annual leave is taken) must be approved, prior to travel and retained on file.

IV. USE OF POV RATHER THAN COMMON CARRIER

When it is determined that common carrier is the most cost advantageous method to the government and an employee elects to travel by privately-owned vehicle (POV) or by Government-owned vehicle (GOV) rather than common carrier, the employee must be placed in a leave status for excess travel time that occurs during normal duty hours that exceed the amount of time that it would have taken if a common carrier had been used. The Federal Travel Regulations provide that subsistence expenses may not be paid during travel time charged to annual leave. Therefore, an employee that travels by POV or GOV may not be paid subsistence during the period of annual leave even though the employee's estimated cost of travel, including the subsistence expenses may be less than the constructive cost of travel by common carrier.

a. PREPARATION AND APPROVAL

Each time an employee uses a POV instead of a common carrier or GOV, an Individual (Type C) Single (S) authorization must be prepared. The AD-202 must be coded with a "P" in the indicator for Common Carrier Tickets under item 23., Authorized Expenditures. The dollar amount to be recorded is limited to the amount that would have been incurred if the common carrier was used, i.e., POV mileage or local transportation to and from the airport, parking expenses that would have been incurred at the airport, and the cost of the common carrier ticket.

An MRP Form 10-R, Request for Special Travel and a leave slip (for the period of excess travel time which exceeds the amount of time taken if a common carrier were used) must be approved in advance and retained on file.

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